

Sketch

Dirty rhymester's name muddled



Simon Hoggart

THE financial crisis in the Far East could lead to a world recession. Saddam Hussein has sufficient toxic chemicals to kill everyone on the planet. Earl Spencer finds it hard to make ends meet on a million a year. You might imagine that these and other problems gave MPs plenty to chew over.

You would be wrong. Here in its entirety is an early day motion signed by 23 MPs, all of them, so far as I can see, of the Labour persuasion.

"This House condemns and dissociates itself from the utterly offensive and shameful use of a quotation of St Bernard of Clairvaux, made by the Honourable Member for New Forest West (Desmond Swayne), when referring to women who serve in the Armed Forces, that 'To be always with a woman and not to have intercourse with her is more difficult than to raise the dead' and the following reprehensible comment made by the Honourable Member, that 'As one is not capable of the latter, one is certainly not capable of the former', since both quotation and comment demean the valid contribution that women can and will continue to make in the British Armed Forces."

(Mr Swayne is a new Tory MP. He has floppy hair, sometimes affects floppy bow ties, and has a generally floppy manner. As I have mentioned before, he gives the impression of having escaped from a Dornford Yates novel. I see him in a racing green convertible Bentley, the bonnet held down by leather straps, flashing through French villages at 90mph, scattering chickens and gendarmes. He appears to be a bit of a bouncer. You suspect that his definition of a gentleman is someone who tells a girl his real name.

Naturally my first reaction to the motion was anger that St Bernard had been dragged

into this foolish dispute. Mr de Clairvaux is unable to answer back, owing to the fact that he passed away in 1133. And why should a dead saint be expected to say nothing which might displease a member of the feminist sisterhood eight centuries later?

I checked his entry in the Encyclopaedia Britannica. It was, perhaps inevitably, something of a hagiography. But reading between the lines, St Bernard appears to have been a bit of a bonker as a youth. He also wrote dirty doggerel, the medieval Burgundian equivalent of Eskimo Nell.

This was all a source of regret to him, so he founded a new holy order in an attempt to reform himself.

It was an all-male institution, not least because, as his remark quoted above implies, he feared that he and the novitiate would be at it like rabbits (or indeed Earl Spencer) if they had the chance.

So St Bernard was not anti-feminist after all: his remark really translates as "All men are beasts," a view certainly shared by many New Labour women.

In the Chamber, the Chancellor was mocking the Opposition. Members of the shadow cabinet were leaving by the week, a backbencher had joined Labour, and "the downstaging of the Conservative Party continues".

At that very instant, Nicholas Soames stood up. Mr Soames is to downstage what Earl Spencer is to marital fidelity. The House collapsed in laughter. "Certainly not over Christmas!" roared Mr Soames.

Then Jack Straw introduced his white paper on youth crime. This has the sappy title of *No More Excuses*. The Home Secretary's plan to get at least half the population into custody, with the other half guarding them, is proceeding at top speed. Soon, according to the white paper, he will have the capacity to hang up 10-year-olds, on the grounds that adult criminals usually start as child criminals.

But why stop there? Ten-year-olds start off as tiny infants. We are all born in sin, as St Bernard undoubtedly said, and it's never too soon to lock 'em all up, perhaps in special birthing cells.

Review

Sensitive slant on issue drama

Stuart Jeffries

EastEnders

BBC1

LAST night Bianca Butcher, EastEnders' flame-haired teen firebrand, decided to terminate her pregnancy after 20 weeks. As a result, she joined the ranks of soap opera characters who have been put through abortion storylines: Sheila Grant in Brookside, Michelle Fowler in EastEnders itself, Linda Fowler in Emmerdale, to name but a few.

Arguably, abortion has become an exploitative staple brought out more frequently as soaps become more sensationalist. And this very sensationalism means that mere abortion is not enough — it must be abortion with a twist. For example, during Brookside's controversially exploitative incest storyline earlier this year, Georgina Simpson had an abortion after being impregnated by her brother, Nat.

Typically, EastEnders' latest abortion story was much grimmer and more downbeat than could be dreamed of in Brookside's current philosophy. Bianca's decision followed an ante-natal scan which showed that her daughter would be born severely handicapped.

What was impressive was not the information packed into the week's three episodes, which were written with the collaboration of the Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus — although this was valuable — but the effective dramatisation of a young, rather dim and deeply uncertain couple struggling to

come to a decision and dealing with its consequences.

Anti-abortionists, I am sure, would have hated the thrust of this drama, not just because Bianca finally decided to go through the undeniable ordeal of a termination so late on in a pregnancy, but because it depicted the couple as two human beings rather than murdering monsters.

Forty callers may have complained to the Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus that the storyline was negative about the life hopes of a severely handicapped child and its parents, too, but, against this, surely it is important that the human drama of having an abortion is depicted on screen, and as non-judgemental as possible.

Simon Ashdown's script was often cunning at meeting this challenge. Structurally, though, the abortion story was marred by interspersing it with other storylines — Ian and Cindy's legal wrangling, Robbie's pursuit of Mary. But who cared about them? The week's final episode, at least, cried out to be devoted wholly to Bianca and Ricky's drama.

Bianca was presented with her dead daughter in a basket. "She had tiny fingers, little face, the softest skin," she told Ricky afterwards. "I held her right up close to me so I could remember every bit of her."

This was affecting drama, acted by Patsy Palmer and Syd Owen with as much skill as you will witness in a soap. Better than that, though, was the fact that EastEnders never proselytised in favour of abortion, but showed sympathetically what can happen to parents who choose that option.



Around 4,000 people remain on Montserrat, where the Soufrière Hills volcano still poses a danger to life and property

PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN MCCONNICO

MPs highlight Montserrat shambles

Tim Radford
Science Editor

THE people of Montserrat have been neglected by the British authorities. Live in

wretched conditions and face the danger of fatal lung diseases, a report by a group of MPs who visited the volcanic Caribbean island claimed yesterday.

Their report paints a picture of islanders kept in the dark, living in makeshift

conditions, unable to work and dependent on food aid.

The MPs said in their report they were appalled at the suffering of the islanders and at government mismanagement of the dependent territory.

More than 7,000 people have left the island, often to face official neglect and confusion in Britain. The 4,000 who remain are breathing toxic volcanic ash.

In the long term, they face diseases such as silicosis. In the short term, they are still at risk from the volcano.

"There is still serious risk to people remaining in the north of Montserrat," says the report of the Commons international development committee. "The volcano could explode again and there could also be continued, heavier ash falls. Danger is exacerbated by inadequate health care and the population's ignorance of evacuation plans. We urge that risks be made clear to all who remain on Montserrat."

rat and that vulnerable groups be strongly advised to evacuate immediately."

The committee had sharp words for both the present and previous British Governments, the Foreign

Office, the Department for International Development, the island's own government, and the British-appointed governor.

The Soufrière Hills volcano erupted in July 1995.

The first of a series of evacuations of the capital, Plymouth, began. In June this year, 19 islanders were killed in sudden flows of molten rock.

By then, Plymouth was in effect buried under ash, most of the island's farms were destroyed and the remaining islanders were crowded into makeshift shelters in the north. Many had no access to savings or insurance — the local offices were buried.

The committee was "amazed" that nobody had undertaken a comprehensive survey of the population. It also said that the islanders would have been "immeasurably" better prepared for the crisis had a 1987 report been read

carefully rather than buried in Whitehall.

"The constitution of Montserrat has proved unequal to the demands of this emergency," the report said. "No one on or off the island had full and untramelled executive control."

Clare Short, the Minister for International Development, welcomed the report. "No one can give back to the people of Montserrat their homes and livelihoods... but I hope this report will make a contribution to improving the lives and safety of the people of Montserrat and the future of their island," she said.

Montserrat: first report of the international development committee (Stationery Office, £20.50)

Beckett wins pay fight

Minimum wage to be single rate with only limited exemptions

Seumas Milne
Labour Editor

THE END of poverty pay was promised by the Government yesterday as it published its national

minimum wage bill, which revealed that Peter Mandelson, Minister Without Portfolio, has lost his battle for sweeping exemption powers.

The historic measure to introduce a legal floor under wages will boost the pay of millions of workers, including homeworkers, agency and domestic staff, while employers who refuse to cough up will face a new criminal offence and a fine of up to £5,000.

Cabinet papers leaked to the Guardian earlier this month showed that Margaret

Beckett, the Trade Secretary, clashed with Mr Mandelson over his proposal that the bill should give ministers the flexibility to introduce wide-ranging exemptions from a minimum wage, including on the basis of region, sector or size of firm.

But the final bill explicitly rules out the possibility of such exemptions and yesterday Mrs Beckett stressed the need for the new minimum to be as simple and universal as possible. Emphasising that a minimum wage was as much about sound economics as fairness and social justice, she declared: "It will be a single rate that will apply to all regions, sectors and size of firm."

The bill does, however, allow for lower rates for trainees and young workers under 25, and excludes the

genuinely self-employed, prisoners, charity workers and children below the school leaving age from minimum wage protection.

The Low Pay Commission, which is currently taking evidence from employers and unions around the country and is due to recommend a rate for the minimum wage next spring, has been asked to consider lower rates for young workers in the teeth of opposition from the TUC and the respected Low Pay Unit lobby group.

More than a third of those earning less than £4 an hour, for example, are aged between 16 and 24. The TUC is arguing for a rate of £4-plus, while the CBI wants nothing more than £3.30. Professor George Bain, commission chairman, has said that £3.75 would not be outrageous.

Despite concerns about a possible lower youth rate, trade union leaders were cock-a-hoop yesterday at the public rebuff for Mr Mandelson over his minimum wage intervention.

John Redwood, Mrs Beckett's Tory shadow, predicted that the minimum wage would destroy jobs and that the Government would be forced to amend its own legislation to introduce the kind of exemptions Mr Mandelson had proposed. "That is the way it has gone in other countries," he said. "Then we'll be in broken promise territory."

The bill offers three routes for making the minimum wage stick. Individuals will be able to take infringements to industrial tribunals, an as-yet unspecified agency will seek to enforce the rate through compliance orders,

and, in extreme cases, employers will face prosecution. Ian McCartney, the minister responsible for the detailed work on the new legal minimum, yesterday pledged that resources would be made available to ensure enforcement was effective.

The publication of the bill had a special significance for him, he said, after 30 years of campaigning for a minimum wage. His support for a legal minimum began after he was sacked from his job as a six-day-a-week chef earning £7.35 in Glasgow in 1968 for asking his boss for a pound-a-week rise when his second child was born.

Both the UFF and UFF tried to play down the significance of the umbrella body's demise. But there have been violent skirmishes between the groups since, mainly over drugs deals.

The gunman who attacked Mr Mahood are thought to have entered through the unlocked back door and shot him as he worked upstairs. It is understood he was with a woman at the time. She was unharmed.

The gunmen escaped through the back door. A security video camera has been seized by police.

Bill Stewart, RUC chief constable, condemned the shooting and appealed for witnesses to come forward.

Leader comment, page 12

Spencer reveals divorce deal rejected by wife

Stuart Miller

EARL Spencer yesterday released details for the first time of the settlement he is offering his estranged wife as he abandoned a legal action to gag South African newspapers from covering the bitter divorce case.

As attacks on his reputation continued over his alleged treatment of former model Victoria Lockwood, his lawyers attempted to seize the initiative by spelling out an offer they described as the most generous ever made in South Africa.

In addition to the £300,000 lump sum already made public, they revealed for the first time that he is offering a house and contents worth around £250,000, £2,500 a month tax-paid, free medical advice and a car. He is also offering to meet all the costs of bringing up their four children, aged between three and six.

Lord Spencer's spokeswoman, Shelley Ann Claircourt, told reporters outside Cape Town's High Court: "This offer made to Victoria represents an unprecedented amount for a woman or wife in this country, particularly considering the brevity of this marriage."

Lord Spencer had also given an undertaking that the sum would be reassessed by an English court should Lady



Lord Spencer yesterday put stop to action against papers

Spencer return to Britain, she said, adding that there were more details in the offer that had not yet been made public.

But Miss Claircourt admitted that former model Lady Spencer appeared to have been "underwhelmed" by the offer, which falls far short of the £3.75 million she is claiming. Her lawyers said they would seek to show that the marriage lasted only five years because of the behaviour of Lord Spencer.

Leading divorce lawyers in London also dismissed it as "paltry", compared with what she would be likely to receive if the divorce case were heard in London.

where a family law expert called by his lawyers as a witness dismissed his wife's claims that she would receive a higher settlement in an English court because of her husband's alleged infidelities. Nicholas Mostyn told the court: "It is rare for conduct to be taken into account. It takes three to commit adultery. To put it another way, it is a symptom of a broken marriage."

The details were revealed shortly before it emerged that Lord Spencer has withdrawn a high court application to prevent two Cape Town newspapers from reporting details of increasingly lurid details of the case on the grounds that it was harmful to his children.

His wife's lawyers have accused him of being a serial adulterer, sleeping with up to 12 women within months of getting married. His legal team have hit back with pointed references to Lady Spencer's spell in an addiction clinic to suggest that she would not be able to cope with a large settlement.

Lord Spencer said he sought the injunction against the Cape Times and the Cape Argus to protect his children from "malicious and unfounded allegations made against me". But after a day of negotiation between his lawyers and the newspapers, he said in a statement that he did not want to see a personal matter turned into a constitutional issue.

He's back... in time for Christmas

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Former chairman rejects 'selective smear' as government report into share-rigging scandal condemns sharp practice in the City

Saunders 'stole £3m from Guinness'

Dan Atkinson

ERNEST Saunders stole £3 million for his own benefit from drinks and brewing giant Guinness, government inspectors reported yesterday. The temptation to help himself to this huge sum from the company of which he was chairman was irresistible, according to the results of an 11-year inquiry into the £2.35 billion bid battle for the Distillers empire.

It would have required almost superhuman powers of self-denial for Mr Saunders to agree payment of huge sums to... [others] while he, the architect and dynamo of

the successful bid, received nothing but his regular salary.

They conclude: "To understand is not to excuse. It was not for Mr Saunders to vote himself a further bonus, let alone one of this remarkable magnitude."

This is the first time Mr Saunders has been declared to have stolen money for his own use during the bitter and controversial takeover fight in 1986. In 1990 he was jailed for his part in a share-rigging operation designed to pump up the value of Guinness shares during the bid, but the trial explicitly excluded any suggestion of personal enrichment.

Ernest Saunders yesterday described the theft finding as

a smear, adding that it was "completely and utterly untrue". The 62-year-old businessman said the report, compiled by Department of Trade and Industry inspectors, was "selective" and "politically motivated".

Inspectors David Donaldson QC and Ian Watt, a chartered accountant, reinforce the 1990 court verdict, in which Mr Saunders was found guilty of organising an illegal operation to support Guinness's shares by using the company's own money to ensure victory in the fight with Argyl - now the supermarket group Safeway - for control of Distillers, then the grandest name in the world of whisky and of spirits in general.

Again and again, they accuse him of having lied to them and accuse him also of having tampered with evidence. But they add that he was not alone in the City at that time in using sharp practice to get what he wanted. "It would be easy to regard Mr Saunders as a man corrupted by a milieu. Such an assessment would contain an element of truth."

"It was not Mr Saunders who conceived the techniques used in the support operation... on the other hand, it was Mr Saunders who decided what company he should keep... far from resisting the sirens, he adopted their song. The success of the bid corrupted him further, leading thereafter to unjustifiable

favours for cronies and self, and a dubious attitude to truth." At the heart of the Guinness bid was an operation to indemnify "friendly" holders of Guinness shares against any loss on their investments and to pay "success fees" to certain parties. Mr Saunders's £3 million formed part of a £5.2 million payment from Guinness supposedly to US lawyer Thomas Ward via a tortuous route. The payment was said to be for services rendered by Mr Ward during the bid. But £3 million of this ended in Mr Saunders's account at Swiss bank UBS. Mr Saunders said this was simply a parking space for money destined for Mr Ward.

The inspectors did not believe him. "The natural inference to be drawn... is in our assessment also the correct one: £3 million of the £5.2 million payment was intended for the benefit of Mr Saunders."

Noting Mr Saunders's energy, the inspectors said he "dominated the company virtually from the moment of his arrival in 1981". Mr Saunders's five-year jail sentence was halved on appeal and he has returned to life as an international businessman, with interests in Britain and America and earnings reported at more than £500,000 a year.

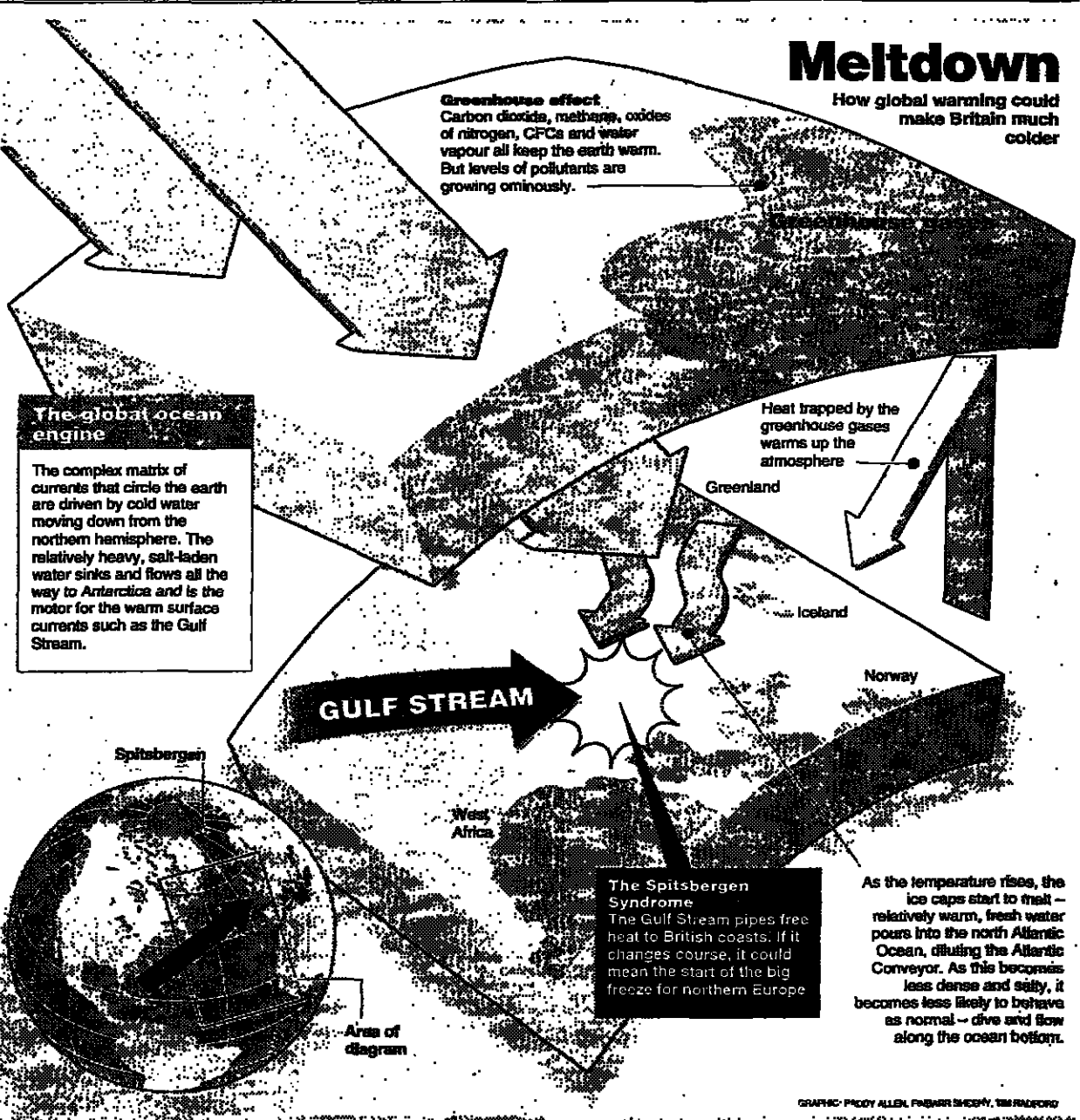
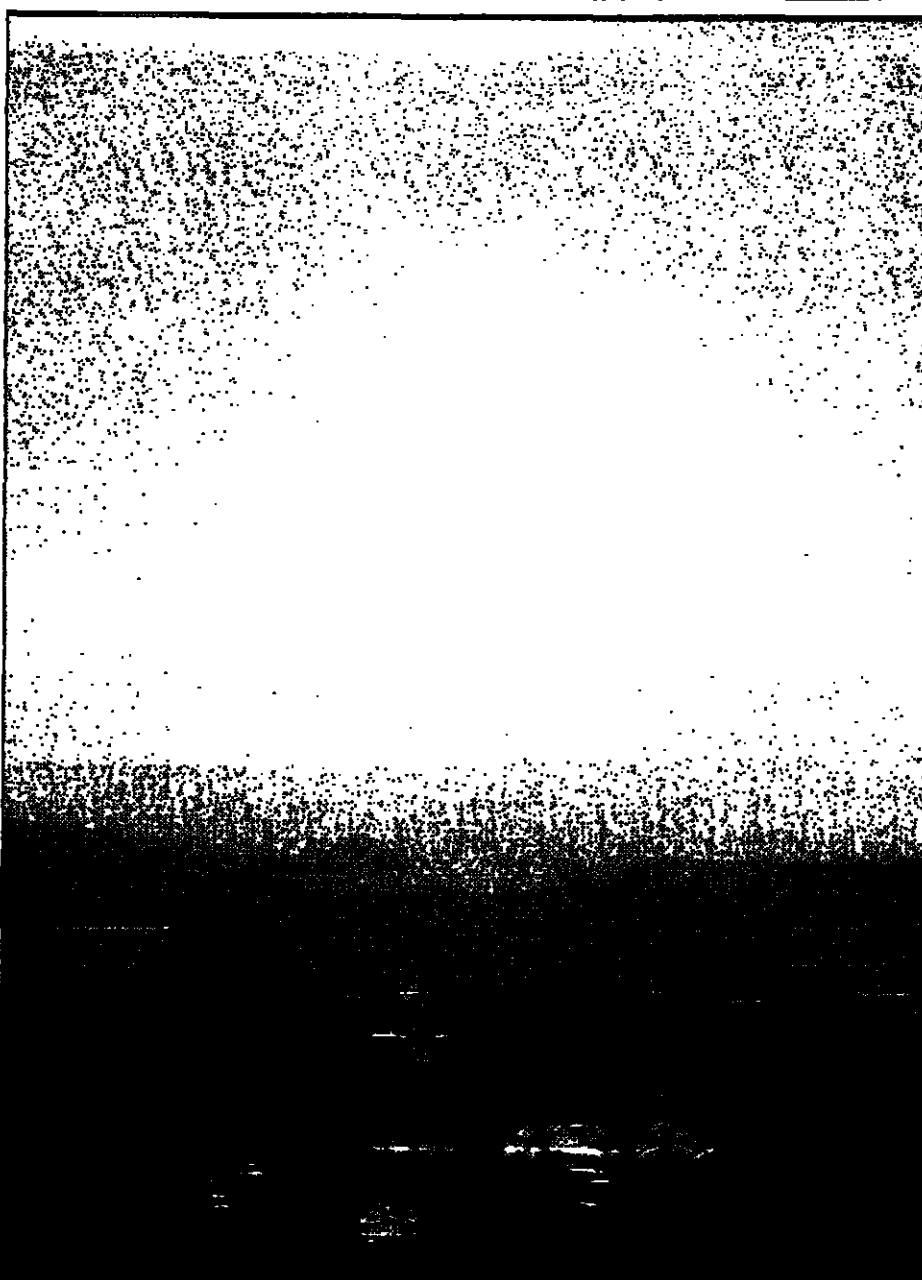
Enterprise of deception, page 15; Notebook, page 16



'The success of the bid corrupted him further, leading to unjustifiable favours for cronies and self, and a dubious attitude to truth'

Report's verdict on Ernest Saunders (left)

First global warming promised us sunflowers in Sidcup and maize in Manchester. Now, with scientists predicting the demise of the warming Gulf Stream if the ice caps start melting, we could be left with igloos in Ilford



Record global temperatures bring scientists cold comfort

Tim Radford
Science Editor

WINTER temperatures in Britain could fall by an average 11C if global warming shuts down ocean circulation systems and turns off the Gulf Stream, a US oceanographer warns today.

In a paradox of the greenhouse effect, the British Isles would then face temperatures to match those of Spitsbergen, 600 miles inside the Arctic Circle.

The warning comes as British scientists predict that 1997 will be the planet's warmest year since records began. Both reports are timed to con-

centrate the minds of politicians gathering in Kyoto, Japan, next week to discuss human impact on climate - and how to control it.

The Met Office's Hadley Centre for climate research and scientists from the University of East Anglia's climate research unit yesterday announced that they estimated that the average surface temperature of the planet this year would be 0.43C warmer than the 1961-90 average. This beats the previous record year, 1995.

A Met Office spokesman said: "This increase in average temperature is a very good indicator that global warming is with us and we should be very concerned

about it. It is significant that the five warmest years have all been in the 1990s."

Carbon dioxide from factory chimneys and car exhausts is likely to double in the next century, warming the planet by between 1.5 and 4.5C. Nine of the planet's 10 recorded warmest years have occurred since 1983.

A warmer world could mean unpredictable climatic consequences. Scientists have raised the spectre of a change in the Gulf Stream, which keeps Britain warmer than its latitude might dictate.

Dr Wallace Broecker of the Lamont Doherty Earth Observatory of Columbia University in New York reports in Science today that the ocean

circulation systems have changed in the past, precipitating dramatic changes.

"Might the ongoing build-up of greenhouse gases in our atmosphere trigger yet another reorganisation of the climate system?" he writes. "Were this to happen a century from now, at a time when we struggle to produce enough food to nourish the projected population of 11 to 16 billion people, the consequences could be devastating."

He is one of dozens of scientists worried about an invisible part of the global climate machinery called the Atlantic Conveyor, a huge cataclysm of cold salty water that sinks in the north Atlantic, and runs southward along the ocean

bottom to join a watery race-way around Antarctica. This forces the current to turn, to become part of the motor that propels warm surface water such as the Gulf Stream from the Equator to Europe. This carries the heat equivalent of 27,000 times the generating capacity of Britain. Without it, northern Europe would be in an Arctic grip.

But oceanographers have only recently begun to understand why the Atlantic Conveyor works at all. The north Atlantic is colder and more salty than other parts of the ocean. Cold salty water is more dense than warm fresh water, so it sinks and begins to flow along the ocean floor in a current 16 times stronger than the world's rivers combined.

But if the north Atlantic waters were warmed by only a few degrees, or if they were diluted by just a little more fresh water from more rainfall, more melting ice, or digesting glaciers, they might not be dense enough to sink. The entire conveyor might shut down or break up, with

serious effects on global climate, Prof Broecker said.

Studies of ice cores from Greenland have shown that in the past, the earth's climate has switched with dramatic speed. With each switch from mild to cold, there have been armadas of icebergs in the north Atlantic, and evidence of a dramatic change in wind and storm patterns. The conveyor is the "Achilles heel" of the climate system, he said.

"We must take seriously the possibility that such a collapse would have profound consequences."

One of these, he warned, would be widespread starvation.

Dr John Mitchell of the Hadley Centre said last night that British computer models of climate change showed a weakening of the ocean circulation system, but not necessarily the same abrupt end, nor the spectre of ice off Dover.

"The main message is that climate is not simple," he said.

Summer in SpitsBritain

EARLIER this year, the Department of the Environment painted a picture of the effects of global warming on Britain, writes Tim Radford.

The experts spoke of a climate appropriate to the Loire Valley, starting in the south of England and gradually making its way north over the decades.

But from the start, climate scientists have had reservations. Britain's place in the sun depends entirely on an oceanic accident: the curl of the Gulf Stream transporting tropical heat from the Bermuda triangle to the Bristol Channel.

With global warming and the Gulf Stream, there would be a landscape of sunflower fields and vineyards.

With global warming but without the Gulf Stream, the picture would be very different.

Now the scientists of Columbia University have at least taken a guess. In a Spitsbergen summer, temperatures sometimes rise to 15C and ships have even been known to land visitors there.

In winter, temperatures fall to -18C or lower - occasionally a lot lower.

There would be consequences in a SpitsBritain: rainfall in the northern islands would be relatively light at an average of about an inch a month. Trees would not obscure the view: only little polar willows and stunted dwarf birch would grow amid the mosses and lichens.

Birdwatchers would see snow buntings, ptarmigan, sandpipers and eider ducks. Instead of red deer and badgers, there would be musk-ox and polar bears. There would be no crops, but hardly any weeding either.

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- 16.2" BOX PRICE, 16.2" MONITOR, 16.2"
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Richard Norton-Taylor looks at the latest Public Records Office releases

Lesbian pilloried 'to save nation's morals'

RADCLIFFE Hall, author of *The Well of Loneliness*, the celebrated novel of lesbian love, was pilloried by the popular press, attacked by Rudyard Kipling, but praised by the Bloomsbury set, including Virginia Woolf, after the book was banned in 1928.

Home Office officials told her publisher, Jonathan Cape, that it was "inherently obscene ... it supports a depraved practice (and) is gravely detrimental to the public interest".

A senior civil servant added: "Incidentally, it would appear to be clear that the authoress is herself what I believe is known as homo-sexualist, or as she prefers to describe it, an 'invert'."

Sir William Joynton-Hicks, widely known as Jix, described it as "obscene and indecent" as Cape decided to withdraw the book after it was savaged in the popular press, and in the *Daily Express* in particular.

Cape sent a proof of the book to the Paris publishers, *Penguen Press*. Copies were seized by police at Dover.

The case went to Bow Street magistrates court where Norman Birkett KC, Hall's counsel, pointed out



The suppression of *The Well of Loneliness* by lesbian Radclyffe Hall, right, had resonance of later attempts to ban books

that there were "no filthy words" in the novel. He drew a distinction between "inverts" and "perverts".

The chief magistrate, Sir Charles Eiron, did not appreciate the distinction. He ordered all copies to be destroyed.

The Home Office was besieged by hundreds of letters as Hall was supported by Virginia Woolf, Sir

Leonard Woolf, and even the macho spy writer John Buchan.

The case went to appeal where Judge Sir Robert Wallace described the book as "disgusting ... It is an obscene book prejudicial to the morals of the community".

With a resonance of later attempts to ban books — notably the Thatcher ad-

ministration's attempt to ban *Spycatcher*, the memoirs of the MI5 agent Peter Wright — an unidentified Home Office official wrote: "I am afraid the unfortunate feature of the whole matter is that from the proceedings, the appellants will have derived very considerable profits, but at least the standard of decent literature in this country

has to some extent been maintained".

The *Well of Loneliness* was finally republished in 1949. It is widely regarded as one of the first and one of the most powerful statements of lesbian love.

"Give us [lesbians]", appeals Stephen Gordon, the main character, at the end of the novel, "also the right to our existence".

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MI5 behind suffragette plot to kill PM

A PLOT to assassinate David Lloyd George, prime minister in the first world war, which led to the conviction of a militant suffragette, was the result of a set-up by undercover agents, secret Home Office records released yesterday show.

Alice Wheeldon was sentenced to 10 years penal servitude at the Old Bailey in 1917 accused of conspiring to murder Lloyd George and the Labour leader Arthur Henderson. She and her daughter, Winnie, were accused of attempting to kill the prime minister with a poisoned air rifle pellet.

But the documents reveal how she had been approached at her Derby home by Alex Gordon, an agent from an MI5 branch called PMS2, who won her friendship by masquerading as a conscientious objector. Gordon, who called himself "No 5" and whose real name was William Rickard, is described as "acting on general instructions to get into touch with revolutionaries and people likely to commit sabotage".

Gordon claimed after one visit to Derby: "It is quite certain that Mrs Wheeldon has only been waiting for some extremist to come her way who would be wicked or mad enough to aid her in her nefarious designs."

He said he told her he was prepared to "scheme the destruction of the whole cabinet provided the weapons employed were not crude".

During another visit when he was accompanied by "Mr B" — believed to be a refer-



David Lloyd George: target of assassination plot

ence to Herbert Booth, a senior PMS2 agent — Gordon claimed that Mrs Wheeldon said Lloyd George was the "cause of so many men being killed and of so much misery ... I should like to get that other bouter George at Buckingham Palace too".

According to Gordon, Wheeldon procured curare poison hidden in pills and supplied by a son-in-law, Alf Mason, a Southampton chemist. The poison was intercepted in the post.

However, the historian Nicholas Hiley — an expert on MI5's early history — said yesterday that what Wheeldon actually agreed to was a plan to poison dogs guarding internment camps.

Incarcerated in Aylesbury jail, Wheeldon fought for better conditions for prisoners. A warder complained that Wheeldon called her "a damned flaming vampire".

**CONVICTS
LUNATICS
AND
WOMEN!
HAVE NO VOTE
IN PARLIAMENT**

Protest poster: Suffragettes were target of MI5 agents

By the end of the year she went on hunger strike, saying "she was going to die and that there would be a great row and revolution as the result". In December 1917, Lloyd George overruled the advice of his ministers and agreed she should be released after serving nine months.

Papers record that he "urged strongly that she should be licensed on the grounds of her state of health. He evidently felt that ... in view especially of the fact that he was the person who she conspired to murder, it was very undesirable that she should die in prison".

Gordon and other agents were told by the security services before the trial to "make themselves scarce". He fled to South Africa and committed himself to an asylum.

PMS2 stood for "parliamentary military secretary's department, section 2".

Straw at war with youth crime

Duncan Campbell
Crime Correspondent

PLANs for curfews to keep under-10s off the streets, orders to make parents control their children and wider powers to lock up under-13 offenders were announced yesterday by the Home Secretary, Jack Straw.

He described his White Paper as "the most radical reform of the youth justice system since the second world war".

The proposals were broadly welcomed by police organisations, but some children's groups and penal reform organisations said some of the them were unworkable and unfair.

Mr Straw said an estimated 7 million crimes were committed each year by juveniles. It was time for a root-and-branch reform of the system.

"Today's young offenders can too easily become tomorrow's hardened criminals. For too long we have assumed they will grow out of their offending behaviour if left to themselves ... an excuse culture has developed within the youth justice system."

"It excuses itself for its inefficiency and too often excuses

young offenders who come before it, allowing them to go on wasting their own and wrecking other people's lives."

He said an estimated seven million crimes were committed each year by juveniles. It was time for a root-and-branch reform of the system.

While a number of Mr Straw's proposals have been

'Parents are not confronted with their responsibilities. Victims have no role and the public is excluded.'

flagged over the last few months and will feature in the forthcoming Crime and Disorder Bill, Mr Straw spelled out for the first time exactly what they will mean.

It was time for offenders to be confronted with what they had done: "Offenders are rarely asked to account for themselves. They are by-

standers in the process, at best bemused by the obscure theatre of the occasion. Parents are not confronted with their responsibilities. Victims have no role and the public is excluded."

Police groups gave a broad welcome to the White Paper. Charles Clark, spokesman for the Association of Chief Police Officers, said: "ACPO welcomes the proposals and the comprehensive approach towards tackling youth offending ... there are, however, a number of untested practicalities and potential resource implications."

A spokesman for the Police Federation gave a general welcome to the moves. Assistant commissioner Ian Johnston, of the Metropolitan police, said: "They will give us the strong powers we need to tackle young offenders."

But Paul Cavadin, principal officer of the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders, said that a youth justice board, the speeding up of the system and intensive supervision were welcome. But he added: "We have some reservations about the parenting order. Abolishing the *doli incapax* rule — that presumes a child under 14 does not know the difference between right

and wrong — is a retrograde step. It means that children who would be too young for criminal proceedings in most European countries would face the full force of the adult law."

Barnardos, though welcoming the speeding up of the system, warned that "demonising parents and children" would do little to reduce youth crime. "Most of the parents we work with do not wilfully neglect their respon-

sibilities but circumstances get beyond their control," Barnardos director of child care, Mike Yarman, said. "Parent education can be very effective ... but only works where parents really want to learn. Making it compulsory will undermine their willingness to get involved." He attacked the abolition of *doli incapax* as too fundamental a change to the law to be introduced without much more thought.

Laws and orders

□ Local curfew schemes to keep unsupervised under-10s off the streets after nine pm;

□ A parenting order aimed at the mothers and fathers of young offenders requiring them to take responsibility for their children or face penalties;

□ A speedier justice system for persistent young offenders, aimed at drastically reducing the time between arrest and punishment;

□ Reparation orders to make young offenders face responsibility for their crimes — they could include apologising to the victim, cleaning graffiti, repairing

criminal damage or writing a letter of apology;

□ Wider powers to detain in secure accommodation those aged between 12 and 14;

□ The abolition of the rule of *doli incapax*, that presumes a child under 14 does not know the difference between right and wrong. Mr Straw believes the rule to be archaic;

□ The formation of a youth justice board to coordinate the implication of punishment throughout England and Wales and to iron out the many existing anomalies among different parts of the country.

Prison verse of Wilde's lover alarmed Whitehall

SONNETS written in prison by Bosie — Oscar Wilde's homosexual lover, Lord Alfred Douglas — were the subject of Home Office controversy in the second world war because of their connection with Winston Churchill.

He wrote the sonnets, in Exeter, while serving a six-month prison sentence in 1923 for libelling the future war-time leader.

In 1942, Douglas, desperate for money, wanted the Home Office to give him the manuscript which had been kept by the prison authorities.

He was found guilty of criminal libel 19 years earlier after claiming that a communique written by Churchill after the Battle of Jutland during the first world war was false.

Douglas claimed that Churchill wrote the communique about the defeat of the British fleet to make money. Stock prices, Douglas claimed, would fall and a large profit would be made by what the Home Office described as "purchasers" of stock.

In fact, the initial communique announcing the defeat



Bosie, Lord Alfred Douglas: jailed for libelling Churchill

was drafted by Lord Balfour, then first lord of the Admiralty. The government subsequently asked Churchill, then a backbencher, to write a more uplifting communique.

Home Office civil servants reported that the sonnets, which begin, "The leprosy of scattered Israel spreads its contagion in your English blood", was a thinly veiled repeat of the libel.

The poem had already been published but the Home Office was concerned that if the public was reminded of the libel, the manuscript would become more valuable.

The government was advised not to "give facilities for ex-prisoners to exploit the incidents of their imprisonment".

The Home Office was also worried about "a section of opinion in the USA who are prepared to use any means at their disposal for running England down". If Douglas was given his manuscript "there would almost certainly be a good deal of undesirable publicity".

An embittered Douglas complained that when Wilde "wrote in prison a filthy and blasphemous screed entitled *De Profundis*, which consisted largely of virulent abuse of myself and others then living, and which contained an apology for every kind of vice and abomination", Wilde was allowed to take his manuscript out of Reading jail with him.

In Exeter, Douglas complained, was "on a high plane" consisting chiefly of "an exhortation of chastity".

Writer who went to town on the good life in Soho

John Ezard on a bon vivant's life

DANIEL FARSON, the author, former television personality and chronicler of Soho died yesterday, aged 70. Earlier this year he said he knew he was drinking himself towards extinction.

But he saw a kind of victory in "a slow form of suicide". He said: "I have not mellowed, I am still behaving badly and I still intend to."

Farson, who died of pancreatic cancer, gloried in "the exuberant tradition" in art and life. He found it in Europe and Turkey but most congenially in London's low-life districts, whose sacred monsters he spent 40 years bluntly celebrating — not always with their approval.

He was the biographer of the painter Francis Bacon, the early music hall star Marie Lloyd and Bram Stoker, the creator of Dracula. He wrote a best-seller about the Jack the Ripper murders and several books about Soho people. One of them was titled *Sacred Monsters*, a breed which he said the TV age had killed.

Last night Michael Wojas, owner of one of his drinking haunts, the Colony Club, said:

"He could be terribly cantankerous but he was very intelligent and generous in spirit as well as with money."

"Although some people thought his books all turned into autobiographies, he did capture an aspect of Soho life."

In his 60s, Farson grew exhausted with Soho yet kept being drawn back: "It is really like a gathering of the swine now. People eat, drink and spend in desperation, as if we were all going over the edge tomorrow. There is not much innocence left."

Farson was the son of Negley Farson, a famous American foreign correspondent and author, also an alcoholic. His father took him on underage drinking bouts and on some overseas assignments.

He reported the 1945 founding United Nations Assembly for a news agency and began to meet celebrities such as Salvador Dali, Noel Coward and Robert Graves as a photographer for the magazine *Picture Post* until it sacked him for taking a male lover on an assignment.

After a bout as a merchant navy steward, he broke into TV in the 1950s, but abandoned that career to buy a London riverside pub. When it failed, he settled down to an authorship which brought him spells of success, fame and poverty.

Obituary, page 14



Daniel Farson ... gloried in the exuberant tradition in art and life

Bomber remains may hold dead air crew

Jamie Wilson

A GERMAN World War II bomber unearthed yesterday by water workers during pipe-laying work may contain the bodies of German airmen.

Two unopened silk parachutes have been found near the partially excavated aeroplane which bears German insignia. A Ministry of Defence spokesman said: "The existence of unopened parachutes suggests there may be bodies in the wreckage."

The workmen were laying pipes on disused land next to South Bank station, near Middlesbrough, Teesside, when

they discovered a cache of live machine-gun shells. A bomb disposal team from Catterick established that a plane was buried on the site.

An area covering a quarter of a mile was sealed off and a specialist RAF team from Witterling arrived to continue the excavation.

Further digging unearthed the German insignia and parachutes as well as a propeller, an aircraft wheel and a machine gun. "Although the aircraft has not yet been formally identified the information we have is that it is a Heinkel fighter-bomber," the MOD spokesman said.

It is thought the aircraft was shot down trying to bomb

the British Steel works site two miles further along the River Tees at Lackenby in 1942 or 1943.

"This is a most unusual find. We cannot recall the last time a German bomber was found in this country in similar circumstances," the spokesman added.

The RAF bomb disposal team will continue excavating today, but it could be some time before the plane is fully recovered.

Acting Superintendent Steve Swales of Cleveland police, who is overseeing the excavation, said: "Painstaking digging is now taking place in a bid to see just exactly what we are dealing with at the site."

In an appropriate Good versus Evil warm-up match for this year's big one, last week the prisoners took on a team of divinity students. The dark side triumphed 2-0.
Jon Hotten visits Barlinnie prison

Sport97 page 8

Forestry Commission bars staghounds

Deer hunting ban cheers blood sports opponents

Geoffrey Gibbs and Ewen MacAskill

OPPONENTS of blood sports were given further cause for cheer on the eve of today's anti-hunting debate in the Commons when the Forestry Commission decided to ban the hunting of deer with hounds on almost 2,000 acres of land on Exmoor and the Quantocks in Somerset.

But although MPs, including cabinet ministers, will vote overwhelmingly this afternoon for the bill to ban fox hunting, its chances of becoming law in this session are remote.

The Government argues it cannot allow time for the private member's bill. The Government's own bills are stacking up, with an overload in the Lords towards spring next year, and a controversial fox hunting bill would enormously add to the problem.

The Prime Minister's spokesman said yesterday: "The Government has given a commitment to a free vote. We have not given a commitment to Government time."

As an olive branch to the anti-hunt lobby, he added: "There is potential for it to be looked at in the future."

The Forestry Commission decision comes only days after it emerged that farmers

in some parts of the Quantocks have indulged in whole-sale slaughter of mature stags since the National Trust ban came into force.

Some estimates suggest up to 90 stags may have been shot. The farmers claim deer can cause up to £5,000 a year in damage to their crops, and that the animals are no longer being kept on the move by hunting activity.

The commission, which suspended the issue of deer hunting licences in August pending a review of the scientific study which led to the National Trust's ban, said there was enough evidence on the stress suffered by deer when hunted by hounds to show a significant welfare issue existed.

Despite the commission's ban, the Quantock Stag-hounds were granted a temporary reprieve to allow alternative deer management arrangements to be put in place on the Somerset hills — an unexpected move which was quickly seized upon by the pro-hunt lobby.

Commissioners, who have also decided to impose stricter rules on the issue of fox hunting licences, denied their decision to issue one final licence to the Quantocks until the end of this season had been influenced by the recent shootings.

But Nigel Muers-Raby,

chairman of the hunt, said the announcement recognised the threat that a hunting ban posed to the future of the red deer herd on the hills.

The Government whips, who organise the legislative timetable, fear the Lords. While the fox hunting bill will easily get through the Commons, there is a majority in favour of fox hunting among the peers and they could delay the bill for months, with many of the Government's own bills falling by the wayside.

Some anti-hunt groups, however, are worried that Tony Blair does not have the courage to take on the fox hunting lobby. The Prime Minister's spokesman refused to give any commitment yesterday to legislating against fox hunting next year or any other year before the next election.

But another, less restrained, Labour source promised: "There is no way we will go into the next general election without banning fox hunting."

It is all a matter of will. If MPs this afternoon make enough fuss and keep the pressure on, the bill will still not get through this year — but they can force the Government to ensure it is in the Queen's Speech next year.

Call of the wild, page 14



Members of seven hunts — more than 500 horses and 3,000 followers — demonstrating in Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, yesterday. PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID JONES



'If anybody knows the killer, or thinks they do, there is a very, very sick person there who is basically living in hell, and his private hell can only be relieved by coming forward'

Murdered schoolgirl's parents in plea for help

Geoffrey Gibbs

THE parents of Kate Bushell, the murdered Exeter schoolgirl, spoke yesterday of the kindly, fun-loving child that had been taken brutally from them and made an emotional appeal to anyone sheltering the killer to save him from his own "private hell" by turning him in.

Surrounded by floral tributes and some of the 600 cards of condolence that have arrived at their detached home in the Exwick area of the city since their daughter's death, they said it was instinct for human beings to protect those they loved. But the killer needed help, and they did not want anyone else to suffer as they had done.

"If anybody knows the killer, or thinks they do, there is a very, very sick person there who is basically living in hell, and his private hell can only be relieved by coming forward," they said.

Kate, 14, was killed almost two years ago while taking a neighbour's dog for a Saturday evening walk along a leafy lane close to her home on the outskirts of the city.

Her throat was cut with what police say was a "substantial" weapon in a ruthless and premeditated attack.

They believe the assault was sexually motivated but say the teenager had not been raped. Her death has sparked one of the biggest murder inquiries seen in the region with more than 120 officers working on the case.

Police have taken 1,700 calls



Jeremy and Suzanne Bushell stand in the bedroom of Kate (top left), their murdered daughter. PHOTOGRAPH: BARRY BACHELOR

from members of the public and videos of a reconstruction of Kate's last-known movements are playing non-stop in city centre stores in the hope of coaxing out further information about a crime that has stunned the community.

Speaking publicly for the first time since the murder of Jeremy Bushell, 44, and Kate's mother Suzanne, 41, said it had been light when Kate set out to walk the neighbour's Jack Russell terrier.

Asked whether he had heard rumours that the lane

was unsafe, Mr Bushell said: "We were not aware of it. There was always that sort of fear in any community something could be unsafe. We have not heard anything specific. You cannot live your life in a cocoon."

"She went out as normal. So

many people walk dogs up and down that lane. We all thought it was a safe place and a safe lane." They did not believe Kate had been specifically targeted by the killer. She had been in the wrong place at the wrong time. It could have been anyone, they believed.

RAF officer tells murder jury of plan to remarry

Alex Bellos

THE RAF officer accused of murdering his wife during the Bosnian conflict said yesterday he had since met another woman he intended to marry.

RAF Regiment Squadron Leader Nicholas Tucker, aged 46, is accused at Norwich Crown Court of murdering his wife, Carol, aged 52, who was found drowned in a Suffolk river after the car he was driving left the road. It is alleged that he staged the accident to try to hide his crime. He denies murder.

Tucker, based at RAF Honington in Suffolk, told the jury he met Dajana Dudukovic, aged 21, while serving with the UN in the former Yugoslavia. He described her as "very flirtatious, fascinating and a very good interpreter".

They did not have sex at the time, but later she spent a week with him at the RAF club in London.

Tucker told the jury that he had few recollections of the accident in which his wife died. He remembered veering off the road to avoid deer and had a recollection of his wife grabbing the steering wheel.

He said he had phoned Miss Dudukovic, who was now living in Switzerland, on the day after his wife's death. Telephone records showed he had spoken to her for 30 minutes.

"Her immediate reaction was that I was playing some sort of sick joke," he said. "And then she was utterly dumbfounded and shocked."

He had also made calls to her from his home, from the mess at RAF Honington, and from the hospital at RAF Wroughton, near Oxford, where he underwent psychiatric treatment for three weeks. He agreed that he still phoned her "from time to time", adding: "Yes I do. We are friends."

The court learned that less than a month after his wife's death he had sent 1,000 German marks (about £460) to Miss Dudukovic because she had asked him for financial help for her family.

Under cross-examination, Tucker said he did not wait to give in open court the name of the woman he intended to marry, since it could be reported by the press, but he was happy to write it down. He was not required to do so.

David Cocks, QC, defending, told the court that Tucker was a "dedicated, dogged and honest" officer. His relationship with Miss Dudukovic was not "credible behaviour", but it had taken place in a war zone, where such things happen.

He dismissed suggestions that Tucker had hopes of setting up home with Miss Dudukovic. He said Tucker had been on good terms with his wife when tragedy struck.

The case continues today.

Judge attacks 'incompetent' arresting customs officer

AJUDGE yesterday criticised customs officers for their "incompetence" after an elderly solicitor accused of money-laundering was handcuffed, writes Luke Harding.

Judge Peter Fingert threw out the case against Jack Trustham at Southwark Crown Court saying he had been subjected to an "overbearing and unnecessary use of manpower".

Mr Trustham, a former solicitor and partner with a West End law firm, was arrested last August at a house he owned on the Isle of Man. He was handcuffed, bundled into a police car and flown to London where he spent several hours in cells before being bailed. He was allowed no opportunity to give an explanation, the judge heard.

Staying proceedings, the judge attacked the "confusing and unreliable" evidence of customs officer David Piper, who carried out the arrest. He also ordered customs to pay Mr Trustham's legal bill, a six-figure sum.

Mr Trustham, 66, yesterday said the arresting officers had behaved like Gestapo. He intends to launch civil proceedings against Mr Piper and a police constable.

"They have nearly killed me because of the stress. I have had two heart attacks this year, in July and September, because of it," he said. "I

can't believe agents of the Crown could act like this."

Mr Trustham, of Hornchurch, Essex, was accused of being involved in laundering £1.5 million of drug money. The money allegedly belonged to a convicted cannabis smuggler, Michael Tivnan, who was jailed for five years in 1991.

Mr Trustham was not inter-

'To deprive a suspect of the right to give an explanation at the first opportunity, must be a breach of a person's human rights'

viewed after his arrest and was given no opportunity to explain his side of the story. "To deprive a suspect of the right to give an explanation at the earliest opportunity, despite him having been cautioned that anything he did say may be used in evidence against him must be a breach of a person's human rights," and is clearly an abuse of the process of the court," the judge said.

Junk food 'is good for children's diet'

Rebecca Smithers Education Correspondent

PARENTS should encourage their children to eat more junk food such as Mars bars, crisps and chips to stem the "anorexia epidemic" sweeping the country, a leading food specialist said yesterday.

Fat was good for youngsters, but they were becoming obsessed with dieting and "fat phobia", thanks to parental influence and images in fashion and teenage magazines.

Dee Dawson, founder of Rhodes Farm, an anorexia clinic for children, told head teachers at the Girls' Schools Association meeting in Bristol that children should be absolved from "the guilt and fear" of eating certain foods.

She hit out at draft government guidelines on reducing fat in school food, which include banning take shops, riding canopies of chips and

restricting chocolate vending machines. "The Government should stop putting out this silly programme about what children should and shouldn't eat," she said. It infringed "our parental rights".

Instead, it should launch a campaign, including an infor-

'We must stop making children feel guilty about eating, making them see food as good and bad...'

mation pack for schools, urging children not to follow low-fat diets. "It would explain that too much fibre is bad for you. White bread has more vitamins and minerals than brown. Chocolate can have a

beneficial effect on health, and chips are an excellent source of energy."

Dr Dawson pointed to a new survey which found that half of five and six-year-old girls were unhappy with their bodies, influenced by "waif-like" images in magazines.

Between 1 and 2 per cent of girls were likely to have anorexia nervosa, and 5 per cent of sixth formers could be bulimic. Yet only 4 per cent of schoolchildren were genuinely overweight.

Parental influence was important. "Children see their mother eat a plate of salad or a low calorie soup; they don't see her finish the cheesecake or eat a tub of ice cream when they have gone to bed."

Dr Dawson told of a six-year-old in her unit and refusing to eat because her thighs were fat. "We must stop making children feel guilty about eating, stop making them see food as good and bad... There is only a good or bad diet."

Mother gets Lords to ban benefits 'ruse'

Sarah Boseley

ADUTCH woman who was ordered by the courts to keep her child in Britain so the British father could see him has won her fight for social security payments in a House of Lords judgment that will open the way for payments to other European nationals.

Mery Wolke, 35, came to live in Britain in April 1994 with her British partner and their son Danny, but seven months later the couple separated and Ms Wolke was obliged to claim income support for herself and Danny.

In April 1995, she received a letter from Michael Howard, then home secretary, telling her that since she was not working and had "become a burden on public funds", she should leave the country, although the letter stated that she would not be forced to go.

Her income support was stopped, and she has since been supported by friends. Yesterday, however, the House of Lords ruled that the Department of Social Security was wrong to stop the payments in a judgment that will relax the rules not only for Ms Wolke, but also for other European nationals claiming income support.

The Child Poverty Action Group, which brought the case in conjunction with Oxfordshire Welfare Rights, says a few thousand people have received similar letters asking them to leave the UK, followed by the ending of their income support.

David Thomas, CPAG's legal officer, said: "The House of Lords clearly saw the Home Office letter as a ruse designed solely to stop benefit."

Ms Wolke was unable to appeal, because she had not been the subject of a formal deportation order from the Home Secretary. She will now receive some £9,000 in backdated payments.

Mr Thomas said: "Mery was put in an impossible position — on the one hand she was told by the family court to stay here, on the other the Home Office and DSS were trying to get her to leave by cutting off her means of support."

As people increasingly work abroad, particularly in the EU, it is inevitable that relationships will form. We believe that the children of such relationships must be properly provided for."

Ms Wolke said: "It was a terrible shock when I lost benefit. I want Danny to have a full relationship with his father but it seems to me that the Government has no interest in that."

European nationals are allowed to live and work in Britain under the Treaty of Rome. They are eligible for benefit if Britain is their place of habitual residence, but can be ordered to leave if they have not found work after six months. They have a right of appeal.

6 BRITAIN



Not caring to be the natural home of Schubertian anoraks, the BBC's classical music station is going for easy access and some comfortable voices to raise the ratings



Bowing to changing times... Radio 3 has been criticised for profligacy by employing five orchestras including the BBC Symphony Orchestra. The station hopes to attract larger audiences with the help of Joan Bakewell (top) and Richard Baker

Radio 3 oldies reach for the classic-shy

Dan Glatzer and Kamal Ahmed

RADIO 3 unveiled its long-awaited blueprint yesterday by announcing the return of two of its most venerable presenters, the ever-youthful classical music enthusiasts Richard Baker and Joan Bakewell.

Their recall accompanies simpler, clearly identifiable schedules and more accessible peak-time programming.

Nicholas Kenyon, the station's controller, defended the move, denying it indicated a dumbing down of the station's traditional interest in broadcasting music by more challenging composers.

However, with listening figures down from a year ago, and under pressure within the BBC to become more economically viable, Radio 3 is determined to capture an audience that it sees as too in-

timidated to tune into what it regards as the cerebral home for classical music anoraks.

Under the new arrangement, Mr Baker, who left Radio 3 amid much publicity in August 1996 to join Classic FM, will be presenting programmes for both stations although Mr Kenyon was unaware yesterday that Mr Baker was to begin a new programme in January for the commercial station.

"Richard Baker is the most authoritative voice on classical music," said Mr Kenyon. "I am delighted that he is returning to the network, and Joan Bakewell is one of the most experienced, open-minded interviewers."

Mr Baker will co-present a daily mid-morning programme, Sound Stories, looking back at 1,000 years of music, while Ms Bakewell will present a daily half-hour interview-based programme called Artist of the Week. The two programmes represent

the cornerstone of a new schedule that aims to simplify the programming.

"It would be an insane person in this day and age who would not commit themselves to change," said Mr Kenyon. "We have to respond to the different way people listen to music and experience culture. [Our] approach combines an intelligent, popular appeal with challenging work on the highest level."

The new programmes include one called Centurions, which examines the cultural icons of the 20th century. "Was Enid Blyton more important than Isiah Berlin?" asked Mr Kenyon. "That is the sort of debate we will hope to start."

The overhaul, he added, was not a compromise between traditionalists and modernisers. "It's a happy medium. The future of Radio 3 is not just about money."

Mr Kenyon also said that he had rebuffed criticism that

the BBC was profligate in having five orchestras, including the BBC Symphony Orchestra. "That argument is cooler than it has been before," he said. "The question is whether the BBC is going to go on being an investor in the cultural life," he said.

Radio 3 had recently been criticised following a poor performance in the third quarter of this year, traditionally a strong time because of the Proms broadcasts.

Although denying the station had any listener target, Mr Kenyon said that he did want to increase Radio 3's audience share and its reach.

This strategy may, however, be the one that traditional Radio 3 supporters see as the dumbing down route.

"We want the widest variety of serious music presented in the most serious way possible," said Stephen Fellows, chairman of the Save Radio 3 Campaign. "What we are worried about is that by a

steady drip-drip process we get easier and easier listening which is all about personalities rather than the music. Continue like that and you get 24-hour drive time."

Other critics have said that older virtues of the station have already been lost.

"I used to listen to Radio 3 from 8am in the morning to 11pm at night, everyday," said Peter Brown of Music Week magazine. "Now I often have to switch it off. Pronunciation is sloppy and the whole tone has changed, you get some presenters who sound as if they are going to burst into a fit of giggles."

Although BBC managers dislike the comparison, Classic FM has almost twice as many listeners as Radio 3.

"Of course the two stations should not be mentioned in the same breath," one BBC executive said.

"Classic FM is actually more in competition with Radio 2."

Soccer tough guy Vinnie joins Mellor to tackle serious music



Vinnie Jones will be tuning up for his hardest match yet

HIS reputation goes before him. But now the man who brought the world the video Hard Men Of Football is to join the one-time minister for fun to extol the pleasures of classical music, writes Dan Glatzer.

Vinnie Jones, honorary Welshman, leader of the Wimbledon Crazy Gang, and budding showbiz personality, is to be the first guest on David Mellor's new programme for Classic FM, Across The Threshold.

Scheduled to begin its six-month run in January, the programme will be

wonders of the classics by making impromptu selections from his 10,000 CDs.

"I like Vinnie and get on very well with him," said Mr Mellor. "He is an intelligent guy and it will be interesting to talk to him about a part he has not talked about before... we've got to break down the snobbery of classical music, this idea that it is just for middle classes."

"It relates to an ambition of mine to infect other people with this disease I have, the love of classical music," Mr Mellor went on. "I have a belief that you don't have to know all your arpeggios to get into classical music."

The guests, who will also include Ken Livingstone and Martyn Lewis, will not be expected to do anything. "All they have to do is turn up and be exposed to something I'll whip out of the record collection."

News in brief

Police hunt woman who disappeared

POLICE are investigating the disappearance of a wealthy woman who has not been seen since leaving her four-year-old daughter at her estranged husband's house in west London two weeks ago.

Gracia Morton, aged 40, was born in Argentina but is a British citizen. She separated from her husband, Jonathan Morton, aged 58, in the summer and moved to a flat in Kensington, west London, with their daughter, Celeste. On November 12, she dropped her daughter off at Mr Morton's home in Holland Park. Her car was left outside the house.

Both the police and her family have issued appeals for anyone who may have seen her or know of her whereabouts to come forward. — Duncan Campbell

Two held over boy's death

A DENTIST and anaesthetist have been arrested after a schoolboy died following dental surgery, police said yesterday. Bradley Müller, aged 14, died last month after an operation to have a tooth removed at Victoria House dental surgery, Barnsley, South Yorkshire.

The dentist, Neville Bainbridge, and anaesthetist Prabhakar Gadgil were arrested then released on bail until February 9 after being questioned by detectives, a police spokeswoman said.

Bradley, who suffered from the rare condition Goldenhar-Hawr Syndrome, which affects the bones, died in Barnsley District general hospital after collapsing at the surgery.

Queen speech on Internet

THE Queen's Christmas broadcast will be available on the Internet, Buckingham Palace said yesterday. Also for the first time, the broadcast is being produced by ITN and transmitted simultaneously on radio and television at 3pm on Christmas Day. Previously, the programme has been made by the BBC and the radio version has gone on air ahead of TV, in the morning.

The text will be carried on the Buckingham Palace website (www.royal.gov.uk) and there will be a link to the ITN website (www.itn.co.uk) for users to access the audiovisual version.

Dinosaur skin found

ONE of the world's rarest dinosaur finds has been discovered — after spending decades as a paperweight on the desk of a university professor, John Challinor. The piece of dinosaur skin — only the fourth to be found — is embedded in a lump of rock and was only identified after Prof Challinor died. A fossil expert at the University of Portsmouth, Dave Martill, spotted that it was part of the tail of a scelidosaurus, which lived about 200 million years ago.

He said: "The skin looked like dark brown leather. To find soft tissue from a dinosaur is exceedingly rare."

Astra director was spy

A DIRECTOR of the failed arms company Astra, which became embroiled in the Iraqi supergun affair, had been a British intelligence agent since 1974, according to documents released by MI5 and MI6 in a civil court case.

The documents were referred to yesterday in the High Court in a preliminary hearing of disqualification proceedings brought against four of the company's former directors by the Department of Trade and Industry.

The agent is named as South African-born Stephan Kock who joined the Astra board in 1986. — David Pollister

EU step nearer gene patents

John Vidal

EUROPE moved another step towards allowing the patenting of human and animal lifeforms yesterday when Lord Simon, minister for competitiveness, committed Britain to a draft European directive which will allow companies exclusive rights to research genetic material.

It marks the latest stage in an intense nine-year battle between governments and industry, who foresee economic and health advantages, and a coalition of consumer, environment and religious groups which object on safety or ethical grounds.

In yesterday's Council of Ministers vote to agree a common position, only the Dutch government voted against, with Belgium and Italy ab-

staining. The Dutch warned of unpredictable dangers in transferring animal genes, while Ireland, Britain and Belgium had reservations about allowing patents on human gene sequences. Other countries were concerned about the implications for developing countries.

Britain, the most important centre of biotechnological research in Europe, had argued that the directive would merely harmonise existing patent law, and without it pharmaceutical companies could go abroad.

But the several hundred groups which oppose it have not given up. The draft directive must now return to the European Parliament where it was rejected earlier this year. "It is not the end of the road at all," said Steve Emott, a policy adviser with the European green group.

Judge orders public school to take back unruly pupil

APUBLIC girls school admitted yesterday that it made an "honest mistake" in unlawfully ejecting a problem pupil who was being educated at taxpayers' expense, writes Rebecca Smithers.

The 190-pupil Cobham Hall, near Rochester, Kent, could today be forced by a High Court judge to take back the 14-year-old — who cannot be named for legal reasons and who is known as "C" — and to fund her schooling itself.

The High Court had earlier ruled that the school had acted "in breach of natural justice" by withdrawing a place for the "bright but unruly" girl. She

had been given a place under the terms of the previous government's assisted places scheme, which allows pupils from poorer families to attend public schools.

Caroline Cavston, chairman of the board of governors, said: "We acted beyond our authority."

Rejecting the school's claim that it was under no obligation to educate anyone other than those it chose, Mr Justice Dyson said: "I conclude the principal reason for the school withdrawing her assisted place — because of her academic performance — did not justify it."

Policies which bend principles to fit the mood of the moment are, by their nature, intellectually inadequate.

Roy Hattersley on David Blunkett

This section, page 13

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NATIONAL SAVINGS

صكا من الامل

MPs to check how Queen spends taxpayers' cash

Openness: Watchdog to be given wider remit

Anna Perkins
Political Correspondent

MPS are poised to win the right to scrutinise the way the Queen spends taxpayers' money and the management of grace and favour apartments in the five royal palaces.

In another gesture towards greater openness, it would mean public scrutiny of the way the £22 million a year paid to the Queen by the Treasury for staff and maintenance of the five occupied royal palaces is spent.

Last night the chairman of the public accounts committee, David Davis, said: "It's a good principle that Parliament should be able to follow public money wherever it goes."

Treasury Minister Dawn Primarolo meets Mr Davis next week, but she has already indicated that she is enthusiastic about the principle of extending the reach of the

committee and of Parliament's financial watchdog, the National Audit Office.

Alan Williams, Labour MP for Swansea West and a long-time campaigner on the issue, said he was "delighted".

Before the election, an inquiry into the running of the royal palaces revealed that there was no formal record of the number of grace and favour apartments, nor of the income the Queen received in rent. A report is likely to be published soon.

The Queen receives £7.9 million a year from the Civil List to pay for the staff and back-up for her functions as Head of State. It is used to be voted annually by Parliament, but is now set for 10 years at a time, with the current figure due to last until 2001. About 70 per cent is spent on salaries. It is scrutinised by the permanent secretary at the Treasury, who reports privately to the Prime Minister. All that is revealed publicly is whether or not spending has exceeded the Civil List allowance.

Prince Charles is said to favour abolishing the Civil List altogether. It was introduced in 1780 when the income from the Crown Estate, now worth over £100 million a year, was made over to the government. He sees it as a modernising gesture.

The Queen also receives a £20 million grant-in-aid from the Department of National Heritage which pays for the upkeep of the five occupied palaces — Buckingham Palace, Kensington Palace, Clarence House, St James's Palace and Windsor Castle. This grant is already scrutinised by the National Audit Office, but it has no guaranteed right of access and relies on the co-operation of officials. Mr Davis said it was an important principle that Sir John Bourn, the NAO comptroller general, "has direct access to papers and people, rather than have to depend on the willingness of those whom he is auditing and the papers they choose to make available."

Until now some members of the committee have been concerned that seeking the right to scrutinise the monarch's spending could be seen as a challenge to the Queen herself. Last night, the Liberal Democrat member of the committee, Robert MacLennan, denied the suggestions. "It would strengthen the sovereign against any possible criticism that public money is being spent inappropriately or imprudently. And it will not happen if the Palace is unwilling. It is not in any way a challenge to the family or the institution."

Do Tory women still have a role to play in William Hague's party? Conference takes dim view of moves to reduce their voice



Michael White and Anne Perkins

MILITANT Tory ladies queued up to berate the party leadership yesterday over what they see as an attempt to reduce their influence.

The Tory leadership dream of single-issue rather than single-sex conferences

In the 21st century, the women's vice-chairman, Peta Buscombe said: "I don't want to dismantle the women's conference, but I want the party around in 50 years' time and that means change."

"It's absolutely disgusting," one delegate responded. "We are the largest women's political organisation in the Western world."

said another, reacting to proposals in the party's Blueprint for Change to abolish places earmarked for women on the party's board of management.

She was unmollified by a pledge by Sir Archie Hamilton, the party vice-chairman in charge of reorganisation, that he was committed to seeing women succeed on merit.

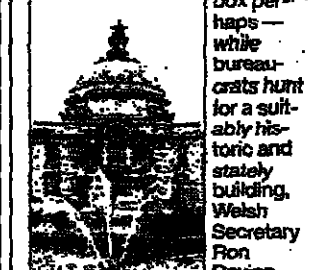
William Hague will today use the conference at the Queen Elizabeth 2 Centre, south London, to set out an agenda for "popular Conservatism" that makes plain he supports traditional family structures, in contrast to his recent show of tolerance for single parent and gay lifestyles.

PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN ARQUES

Yesterday

Good days: Backbench MPs who suddenly discovered their pens. More than 110 signed a Commons motion calling on the BBC to renege a radio programme about children's books, called *Tipsy's Islands*. And more than 100 — all Labour this time — signed a "private" letter to Gordon Brown, begging him to postpone benefit cuts for single parents.

Bad days: The Welsh Assembly. It's homeless. It might have to go into a temporary lodgings — a cardboard box perhaps — while bureaucrats hunt for a suitably historic and stately building. Welsh Secretary Ron Davies announced when launching the Welsh Assembly Bill. The Government's stingy £3.5 million offer for City Hall has been turned down by Cardiff council.



Quote of the day: "Hunting is a great social leveler and it matters not a jot from what background or what walk of life you come from," said Rod Thomas, joint master of the Quorn Hunt, at a pre-hunting rally on the eve of today's debate.

Today

That hunting debate: Mike Foster's bill to outlaw hunting with hounds gets a ride out in the Commons. Over the road, Hague charms Tory women.



Millennium computer bug to cost Whitehall £370m

David Hencke
Westminster Correspondent

THE Government will have to spend £370 million to stop Whitehall becoming victim of the millennium bug — the disease that could wreck computers not programmed to cope with the year 2000, David Clark, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, said yesterday.

The bill — which excludes much bigger sums required to update the National Health Service and local government — was greeted with scepticism by the Conservatives, Liberal Democrats, and professional consultants, who all believed that the Government was lagging behind industry in dealing with the problem.

Mr Clark told the Commons: "We have established the measure of the problem and set in hand plans which are realistic and achievable. But the bulk of the actual remedial or replacement work is yet to be done. The timetable is tight and there is little margin for error."

Cheryl Gillan, the Tory front bench computer technology spokeswoman, said to laughter from the Labour benches, that the statement was "not before time. Many

FIGHTING THE MILLENNIUM BUG — WHITEHALL'S BILLS

	m1000
Ministry of Defence	£200
Department of Social Security	£46.7
Inland Revenue	£26
Employment Centre	£23.15
Home Office	£17.5
Ministry of Agriculture	£11.1
Department of Health (excluding NHS)	£6.1
Customs and Excise	£5.5
Department for Education	£4.8
Highways Agency	£4.3

All costs to come out of existing public spending plans except for the Highways Agency.

... will be disappointed there are many unanswered questions".

Malcolm Bruce, Liberal Democrat Treasury spokesman, said: "The statement today is inaccurate about deadlines, incomplete about costs, insufficient on funding and complacent about the extent of the problem."

A survey by Cap Gemini, computer consultants, suggests the total cost to Britain will be £23 billion and that the Government is lagging behind.

Mr Clark last night released a box file full of Government plans to deal with the problem to prove that ministers were on top of it.

These plans include: 500,000 civil servants have already made sure their pay and pensions will be unaffected — as the Cabinet Office

has already converted their computers.

But lagging behind is Whitehall's driving licence and car tax system, where an internal report predicts that some out-of-date computers will crash at the end of the next year unless remedial action is taken.

Booking a driving test could also cause problems.

It is also not certain whether jobcentres will be able to cope with an internal paper warns there could be unforeseen problems connecting computer systems capable of adapting and replacing those which will not work.

One place totally safe from any change is Whitehall's Buckinghamshire state home owned by the Foreign Office. The centre has no computer systems.

Elite universities face fee sanctions

John Carvel
Education Editor

SWEEPING powers to withdraw public funding from universities charging top-up tuition fees are included in a Teaching and Higher Education Bill, published yesterday by David Blunkett, Education and Employment Secretary.

They are intended to destroy the bargaining position of vice-chancellors at Oxbridge and other elite institutions which have threatened to make their students pay a learning premium if there is not enough direct funding from the Government after 1999.

Mr Blunkett said there would be a means-tested tuition fee of £1,100 a year for full-time undergraduates, backed up by a loan scheme allowing repayment on easy terms after graduation. Any university trying to charge more than this could be made to repay its public funding for teaching and be charged interest on the full sum.

A £165 million boost for the higher education budget in 1998/99 was announced in September, before the tuition fees debate at the Labour Party conference.

This reduced the planned cut in university funding to less than 1 per cent and persuaded vice-chancellors to postpone consideration of top-up fees.

But the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals said yesterday that the short-term funding crisis would be reaching its peak in the following year.

"The big test comes in July,

Main points

- £1,000 tuition fee, but poorer students exempt
- Abolition of maintenance grants
- New student loan scheme with repayments linked to graduate's income
- Collection by Inland Revenue through PAYE
- Reserve powers to penalise universities charging top-up fees
- Probationary year for new staff
- Mandatory qualification for new headteachers
- General Teaching Council to set professional standards
- Offered to inspect teacher training establishments
- Right to education for 16/17-year-old workers

when the Government decides what universities will get in 1998/2000," said Diana Warwick, the chief executive.

Mr Blunkett said top-up fees would distort access to higher education, creating a two-tier system in which only the better off had access to top universities.

"We are charging tuition fees as an alternative to the threat of top-up fees. We have no intention of interfering with universities' freedom. But they have a choice. We are the custodians of public funding. We have the right as a democratically elected government to be able to deal with those funds in ways which promote equity and fairness."

He said the Government would use its reserve powers "if institutions having

received extra income were nevertheless prepared to distort the pattern of entry and create a different sort of market in higher education."

Cambridge university said the ban was likely to be challenged in the courts, although it was too soon to say whether it would join the action. "In the short-term Cambridge is opposed to introducing top-up fees," said a spokeswoman.

"But in the long-term, who knows?"

The bill allows the Inland Revenue to collect repayments by means of loans through PAYE. Mr Blunkett said fears about the impact of fees were based on "misinformation and misunderstandings". The legislation gave reassurance that repayments would be made only when graduates could afford to pay.

In a surprise addition to the bill, the Government will give unqualified employees aged 16 or 17 the right to time off work on full pay for education or training.

The measure is aimed at more than 100,000 young workers who have not got at least five good GCSEs or vocational equivalent. Ministers think the cost to businesses will be £60 million to £120 million a year.

The bill establishes a general teaching council to provide a voice for teachers and regulate the profession. It introduces a mandatory qualification for head teachers and restores an induction year for newly-qualified teachers. Offered is given an explicit right to inspect teacher training courses in higher education institutions.

He said the Government would use its reserve powers "if institutions having

Leader comment, page 12

Number 10 lets light into lobby room

Briefings: No 10's man goes on the record

Ewen MacAskill, Chief Political Correspondent

UNTIL 4pm yesterday, the room did not officially exist. It occupies a space just below the roof of the Commons, with a good view out over the Thames.

Getting to it involves a convoluted march down corridors, up stairs, through doors and finally up a melodramatic spiral staircase.

Behind the heavy door lies an intact Victorian interior: dark wood panelling, antique clock and heavy patterned curtains. Charles Dickens, once a parliamentary correspondent, would have felt at home. Not that he would have ever seen it, because he was not a lobby journalist.

Lobby journalists have gathered here for decades to be briefed by the Prime Minister's chief press officer. But lobby rules have been so strict and secretive that it has never been admitted that these briefings take place, or even that such a room exists.

Until yesterday. Now the lobby system has a new look. It is no longer forbidden to admit the room's existence. The source of the briefings, which in the past had to be described vaguely as "government sources", "Whitehall sources" or, since May 1, "a senior Labour source", will now be more easily identifiable.

The system of off-the-record briefings, which has been creaking for years — especially since Labour took over in May this year — is to be replaced by briefings on the record.

Alastair Campbell, Tony Blair's chief press secretary and one of the most powerful figures in the Labour Government, attracted all the above labels, but from now on will be described as "the Prime Minister's official spokesman".

He will not be personally named because, he said yesterday, he did not want to become a public figure in the way that his White House counterpart had become.

"It would be wrong to build up an unelected figure," said the Prime Minister's official spokesman.

"The important person in the equation is the Prime Minister. It is not the United States of America. It is not a presidential system."

The changes were recommended in a report published yesterday on the Government Information Service.

They are a vindication of a campaign fought by the Guardian, the Independent and the Scotsman in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when the three papers called for a more open system and withdrew from the lobby system in protest at the behaviour of Margaret Thatcher's chief press officer, Bernard Ingham.

One of their complaints was that, under the guise of "Whitehall sources", Mr Ingham was disparaging about Cabinet ministers — describing John Biffen, for example, as "semi-detached".

Downing Street retaliated, fusing journalists from the three papers any information whatsoever, even basic facts such as the Prime Minister's whereabouts.

The papers returned to the lobby system only in 1991, when John Major's government offered a compromise allowing journalists to pinpoint the source as coming from Downing Street.

Yesterday's report said: "We think the current bar on journalists saying that a briefing has been held, or that a source has been used, is no longer justified. But television cameras will continue to be banned to prevent the Prime Minister's official spokesman from getting too much media coverage."

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The Strategic Communications Unit, one of the most powerful teams in government, made up of civil servants and special advisers, who are political appointees.

Why is Labour doing this? In opposition it had a stream-



Tony Blair's chief press secretary, Alastair Campbell, left ... no longer just a source, now 'the PM's official spokesman'

lined media machine: the message(s) for the day would be decided and everyone was expected to follow the line. It has found government more disparate, harder to control. It will alarm some, who will see it as a sinister development: over-centralisation, politicisation of civil servants. Others will welcome it as a sign that Labour is intent on getting its programme through.

The new unit is intended to spot pitfalls, such as the single currency and Formula One rows, co-ordinating ministerial announcements and thinking well ahead, keeping the big picture in mind.

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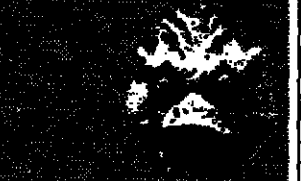
Mr Campbell admitted yesterday that in spite of the new rules there will be times when some press officers, advisers and ministers — including, no doubt, himself — will still want to go off the record, in which case they would become "a Labour source".

Total openness is impossible, but yesterday's announcements help.

When David Clark was speaking yesterday about plans to tackle the Millennium Timebomb he was asked by backbench jester, Rhodri Morgan, if it would help if he reverted to the Julian Calendar. Older Tories could remember when it was abandoned amid complaints that voters "lost" 11 days in 1752. Mr Clark was decisiveness itself. "This Government has no intention of reverting to the Julian Calendar," he declared without even consulting the Cabinet.

Senior Source

Pre-nuptial Hague heads for Ben Nevis



CHAMBER OF HORRORS

SPECULATION that William Hague would jet off to Amsterdam and smoke a few joints for his stag party have proved ill-founded. He did not even have the predicted curry-and-lager night at home in Yorkshire ahead of

his tryst with Ffion Jenkins in the Commons crypt on December 10.

Instead, it emerged this week, Hague celebrated quietly with an eight-hour hill walk on Ben Nevis with six friends. They included the ubiquitous Alan Duncan, the dapper MP whom many Tories would like to be left on the mountain. Were MPs surprised by the news? "Yes," said one. "I didn't know he had six friends."

WHO says New Labour never allows party members to speak out? They have been sent a questionnaire about Government achievements on manifesto pledges ranging from increased educational spending

to the crackdown on young offenders. Supporters should not simply state whether ministerial progress has been "Excellent" or "Good". They are permitted to say it has been "Adequate" or even "Not Enough."

AH, what might have been. It transpires that the late Sir James Goldsmith, whose referendum campaign did the Tories more harm than it was credited with after May 1's landslide was poised to do the same to Labour when cancer struck him down this summer. He had discreet talks with Scotland's doomed "Think Twice" campaigners. Who knows whether the Mexican Grocer's

beady-eyed charisma and his charismatic bank account would have won it for the McNoes.

HISTORY was made yesterday when "the Prime Minister's official spokesman" turned up with a tape recorder to record himself giving Westminster lobby correspondents his first official on-the-record daily briefing. When the official spokesman explained that it would be quite wrong for his unselected self actually to be named as Alastair Campbell, sources very close to the BBC's Robin O'Keeley asked what would happen if a BBC interviewer dared to name him. Was O'Keeley supposed to

deny it? Er, no, came the authoritative reply, that would be disabsonet. As long as no one made a habit of it.

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Senior Source

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German 'eternal students' fight funding squeeze

Ian Traynor in Bonn

IN THE biggest campus protests since 1968, tens of thousands of German students converged on Bonn yesterday to vent their frustration with the underfunding and chronic overcrowding of a worsening university system.

"After 15 years in power this government stands before the ruins of a failed education policy," the student posters proclaimed, denouncing Chancellor Helmut Kohl's government as "politically bankrupt" and "totally remote from the reality of university life".

Politicians of all stripes, including the chancellor, sought to hitch the student grievances, voicing support and sympathy for the strikes and peaceful protesters, and blaming others for the situation in which 1.8 million students struggle in a university system designed for half that number.

The politicians are just trying to exploit our protest, supporting us verbally but doing nothing," said Tom Weller, aged 25, a chemistry student from Koblenz, who said his faculty was so run down that rainwater leaked through the roof of his laboratory.

If the 40,000 protesters in Bonn signalled the biggest

eruption of student anger since the 1968 uprising, the two generations of student rebels had little else in common.

Yesterday's demonstrators were intent on maintaining as much of the status quo as possible in a country renowned for the phenomenon of the "eternal student".

Mr Weller said he would be 30 before he finished his studies and was opposed to reforms aimed at reducing the average of seven years that German students spend at university.

Large banners draped over Bonn university's main building ridiculed the government's reforms, demanding that Mr Kohl and the education minister, Jürgen Rüttgers, be fined eight and nine years at university respectively.

The protests, preceded by strikes and demonstrations in Berlin, Frankfurt, Bonn and elsewhere, illustrate the deep-seated hostility to change, despite a general awareness that the post-war system of welfare and consensus must be reformed if it is to survive.

While the students marched, the political class engaged in a third day of mutual mud-slinging in parliament over the gridlock which has left planned reforms of taxation, pensions, and social security largely paralysed.

In a free university system

where less than 10 per cent of students receive state grants, the protesters demanded binding pledges that tuition fees would not be introduced.

Nicol Wolf, aged 21, a Bonn sociology student, works part-time in an office for £200 a month to supplement the £140 she receives from her mother.

"They want to cut the study times, but how can I graduate more quickly when I'm working three days a week?" she said. "We reject these new reforms because there just isn't any money."

As a result of staff cuts and rising student numbers, the student-staff ratio is increasing and it is common for hour-long queues to form for standing places only in lecture halls.

Jan Crüger, aged 21, a German and philosophy student, said a lottery system was in operation every term for places in German tutorials at Bonn university, which is twinned with Oxford.

"It is normal to have 75 in a seminar designed for 40. We organise lotteries and just try our luck for a place in the tutorials we want to attend."

A few weeks ago at Gießen university, 400 students clamoured to get into a seminar for 50, and the lecturer taking the class went berserk. Since then the upheaval has mushroomed across the country, bringing 50 universities to a standstill.



Thousands of German university students protesting against severe overcrowding and underfunding rally in Bonn yesterday after a week of strikes. PHOTOGRAPH: ARND WIEGMANN

Cook warns off Gypsies

Ian Black in Prague

BRITAIN is not a soft touch for those who claim asylum on the basis of false persecution, the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, told the Czech president, Vaclav Havel, yesterday. Czech Gypsies must be made to feel they have a future in their own country and not expect to be granted asylum, he said.

Mr Cook, visiting central Europe to advertise Britain's enthusiasm for enlarging the European Union, urged Mr Havel and his prime minister, Vaclav Klaus, to address why so many feel insecure in the Czech Republic.

"We will dutifully and honourably carry out our inter-

national obligations to genuine asylum seekers, but I do give a very clear message that Britain does not have an open-door policy to those who may allege persecution and cannot then prove it," he said.

Some 700 Roma people from the Czech Republic and Slovakia arrived in Dover last month after Czech television featured asylum seekers living on weekly social benefits that are nearly as high as the average Czech monthly wage.

Mr Cook made no explicit link to the Czech application to join the EU, but under the Copenhagen criteria for membership of the former Soviet bloc countries, minorities must be properly treated.

Prague has responded to the Gypsy exodus with an anti-racism campaign that

has helped stem the flow while repatriation and social measures are being discussed. "We are monitoring conditions for their return so they do not feel they are coming back to an unfriendly atmosphere," the foreign minister, Jiri Dienstbier, said.

Mr Cook praised the political and economic achievements since the collapse of communism, and repeated his message — given in Budapest on Wednesday — that under its EU presidency, Britain would give a "flying start" to enlargement talks in March.

In a move to help prepare Czechs and others for EU membership, he announced 12 scholarships to help train administrators for the negotiations and assistance to meet EU environmental standards.

Turkey spins out torture case

Ankara is taking its time to uphold human rights, Chris Morris in Manisa reports

HUSAYIN KORKUT'S eyes never stopped scanning the crowd as he described the torture he says was inflicted on him for 11 days in the local police station.

"They're filming us now," he said outside the criminal court in the small Turkish town where he and a group of friends are trying to prosecute the 18 policemen they say abused them.

With the European Union preparing to decide whether to accept Turkey as a candidate for future membership, this is one of the most important human rights cases in the country. The government says it is determined to improve its human rights record, but the message is slow to filter down through the formidable security system.

Mr Korkut and 13 others in their teens and early twenties were arrested in December 1995 and accused of belonging to an illegal leftwing group. Some are serving prison sentences of up to 12½ years. All say their confessions were obtained under torture.

"They blindfolded me," Mr Korkut said. "They gave me constant electric shocks; they squeezed my testicles and they raped me with truncheons."

The policemen have refused to appear in court, and the judges are not inclined to demand their presence.

It may be no coincidence that many of the policemen were transferred a few months before the arrests from Bingöl, in the south-east, where the war against Kurdish rebels continues. What is often done with impunity against Kurds was a profound shock in this affluent western region.

The 10th and latest hearing of the case last week achieved nothing. Photo-

graphs of the policemen which are held just down the road at the security headquarters were not yet available to the court.

"The system is working," the chief defence lawyer, Emin Uz, insisted after the hearing. "We have judges in Turkey, and we have courts in Turkey. It will be solved in our own way."

Human rights groups say delaying tactics are a regular feature of cases like this, which can last years.

Among the observers in court was the German consul-general from Izmir, Manfred Unger, who made it clear that the EU was watching closely.

"Turkey has to fulfil all the standards concerning human rights questions," he said. "That's why it's very important for the European countries to see what's going on here."

Mr Unger hopes the case will eventually be brought to a conclusion, but many of the young people's relatives are close to despair.

Asman Erda, whose son Emrah Sayit is among those arrested, said: "I grew up in the early years of the Turkish Republic. I believed in it, but I've lost all my sense of trust. I no longer have any faith in the authorities. I'm afraid of them."

Sabri Ergul, a local MP and lawyer, went to the police station when the young people were arrested. An officer's mistake led him straight into the room where, he says, the torture was taking place.

"If there is any real law, any justice in this country, the police will be held to account for what they did in Manisa," he said. "I will fight for that until the end. Part of me died when I saw what happened there."

World news in brief

EU leaders tell Poland to toe line

POLAND'S new government felt the crack of the European Union whip yesterday when it was told negotiations over its membership could be blocked indefinitely unless it fulfilled pledges to cut steel tariffs and restructure the industry with the loss of thousands of jobs.

The prime minister, Jerzy Buzek, his defence and foreign ministers and other aides were warned by EU leaders on their first visit to Brussels yesterday that Poland's annual £25 million milk exports to member states faced a ban from Monday, after EU inspectors found half the dairies to have "major hygiene and operational problems".

"New members have to understand that there are obligations to joining the Union," an official said off the record yesterday. — Martin Walker, Brussels.

Chief justice suspended

A GROUP of supreme court judges in Pakistan has ordered that the chief justice, Sajjad Ali Shah, be suspended from his job on the eve of a critical contempt of court case involving the prime minister, Nawaz Sharif.

The judges claim that the appointment of the chief justice three years ago was illegal. The move has intensified the constitutional crisis involving the government and judiciary which has paralysed the country in recent weeks.

A senior lawyer in the prime minister's defence team said he would now not accept any decisions of the supreme court if it were presided over by the present chief justice. The timing of the announcements is crucial. A further hearing of the contempt case against Mr Sharif is due in the supreme court later today. — Richard Galpin, Islamabad.

Finn takes UN post

FINLAND'S former defence minister Elisabeth Rehn will become the United Nations secretary-general's special representative and co-ordinator of operations in Bosnia, a UN spokesman said yesterday.

Ms Rehn, aged 62, who succeeds Kai Eide of Norway, will take up the post as Kofi Annan's aide on January 16 1998. She will be the only woman among some two dozen UN special envoys concerned with trouble spots. — Reuters, New York.

Papon trial resumes

THE trial of Maurice Papon, aged 87, will resume on December 4, a French judge ordered yesterday, after hearing medical evidence that the accused Nazi collaborator would be well enough to appear in court within a week.

Dr René Pariente told Judge Jean-Louis Castagnède, that Mr Papon — who has been in hospital outside Bordeaux since November 17 — was suffering from double pneumonia but, barring further complications, should have recovered by next week. Mr Papon, whose ill-health has delayed the trial, is accused of ordering the arrest of 1,560 Jews for deportation while he was a senior official in the Vichy regime. — Jon Henley, Paris.

Moonshine kills 43,000

MOONSHINE vodka claimed 43,000 lives this year and remains one of Russia's biggest killers despite a crackdown on illegal distilleries, a Russian official admitted yesterday.

Boris Taraschenko, head of the department for economic crimes, said the only way to reduce this figure was to restore the state's monopoly on alcohol sales. "An end will be put to the sales of low-quality vodka, budget revenues will increase and criminal businesses will be ousted from alcohol production," he said.

The move may be motivated by budgetary rather than health concerns. Individual and corporate tax evasion is now so widespread that less than half of projected budget revenues for 1997 have been collected. — Tom Whitehouse, Moscow.

Fire risk on Boeing 747

THE Federal Aviation Administration ordered airlines yesterday to immediately inspect a pump in the centre fuel tank of older Boeing 747 aircraft to reduce the chances of the kind of explosion that killed all 230 people aboard TWA Flight 800.

While saying that it had no evidence that the scavenger pump, which removes leftover fuel from the tank, caused the crash in July last year, the FAA said inspections revealed that the pump's silicone insulating material could break down, causing fuel to leak into the wheel-well of the plane's main landing gear and create a fire hazard. — Los Angeles Times, New York.

Red Cross to keep emblem

THE International Red Cross voted yesterday to keep its world-famous emblem despite indications that it may have led to the deaths of up to 21 relief workers in the past two years, headquarters spokesmen said.

A Red Cross general assembly meeting in Seville, Spain, unanimously passed a resolution to keep the Red Cross and its counterpart Red Crescent. But delegates decided to continue examining the possibility of using a different symbol, possibly a diamond or a hexagon, in certain danger areas. Officials hope that such an emblem would be perceived as more neutral in countries where the cross and crescent are problematic. — AP, Geneva.

Far right mock Netanyahu



A Jewish man in Jerusalem studies a poster depicting the Israeli prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, wearing a Palestinian headscarf, under the slogan "The Liar". The poster was printed by an ultra-rightwing Jewish group in reaction to Mr Netanyahu's offer to give Palestinians control of more West Bank land.

Plug pulled on marijuana

A METER-READER working for the Hydro-Quebec electricity company helped pull the plug on an indoor marijuana farm after noticing high electricity consumption at a local warehouse, police said yesterday.

Montreal police said the employee of the provincial government-owned utility noticed an unusually high level of power was being used to house electronic toys.

After obtaining permission to enter the building, he discovered a crop of 950 young marijuana plants flourishing in a brightly lit hydroponic nursery with freezing winds and snow swirling outside.

Narcotics officers seized the equipment and plants, which carried an estimated street value of 2 million Canadian dollars (\$250,000), on Wednesday. Police were seeking the hydroponic farm's operators. — Reuters, Montreal.

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APPEAL

FOR A UNITED AND UNDIVIDED EUROPE

It is symbolic that on the eve of the 21st century, Europe has the historic opportunity to extend its security, political and economic structures. Vision and determination will be decisive for Europe's citizens and leaders to meet this opportunity and challenge - and enhance peace, stability and prosperity for all.

Together with several other nations, Lithuania is ready to meet this opportunity and challenge. It will endeavour to meet the "Copenhagen" requirements of European Union Membership, following a simultaneous start of accession negotiations. To separate European nations may create new divisions and divisive issues among future Member States. This divides rather than promotes unity.

Lithuania peacefully regained its independence, and stimulated the process that eventually led to the fall of the Berlin Wall. Lithuania is returning to Europe with its ancient culture embedded in European tradition; fostering the principles of acceptance and coexistence of nationalities, that has existed since the Renaissance era during the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. As recognised by the European Commission Lithuania is a democratic country "with stable institutions guaranteeing the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities."

In the past seven years, we have seen Lithuania restoring its sovereignty and becoming a modern, open, dynamic and democratic State - full of energy and optimism for its future among its European allies and friends. Lithuania has based its foreign policy on the positive vision of the future instead of the wrongs of the past. Its friendly relations with neighbouring countries will promote consistently growth in security, stability and unity in Europe.

Lithuania has a lot to offer: an excellent location at the Baltic sea with an up-to-date harbour, well-developed infrastructure; and fine transport facilities. It can serve as a perfect opening for the Eastern markets. We know Lithuania for its well-educated population and well-established scientific community. We recognise Lithuania's sound economic growth, stable currency, and stable and open political environment. The rapidly growing foreign investment is an illustration of the world's confidence in the progress of the Lithuanian economy and its prospects. Even though we recognise Lithuania has many things to do, a simultaneous start of accession negotiations will further promote investments and economic growth.

With all these facts firmly in mind, we call on the people and the Governments of the European Union Member States, to decide at the European Council in Luxembourg that a policy of potential division in Europe must be replaced by a more harmonious approach; to give a simultaneous start to the negotiations for applicant countries meeting the democracy criteria and to begin accession negotiations in 1998 with Lithuania among other candidates. The result will contribute to the creation of a more secure and prosperous Europe for the new millennium; we should seize this historical opportunity.

Helmut Schmidt
f. Federal Chancellor, Germany
Poul Schlüter
f. Prime Minister, Denmark
f. Vice President, European Parliament

Leo Tindemans
f. Prime Minister and f. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Belgium
Member, European Parliament

Hans-Dietrich Genscher
f. Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs, Germany
Catherine Lamouré
f. Minister of European Affairs, France
Member, European Parliament

Otto Graf Lambadort
f. Federal Minister of Economy, Germany
Member, European Parliament, Denmark

Kristoffer Jensen
f. Minister of European Affairs, Denmark
Member, European Parliament, Denmark

Patrice Gelard
f. Senator, France
Paul Flynn
f. Member, House of Commons, United Kingdom

Lino de Benetti
f. Member, Parliament, Italy

Lord Yehudi Menuhin
Conductor, violinist

Prof. Justus Frantz
Conductor, pianist

Prof. F. Hirzenbruch
Max Planck Institute for Mathematics, Germany

Mario Soares
f. President and f. Prime Minister, Portugal
Felipe Gonzalez
f. Prime Minister, Spain

Michel Rocard
f. Prime Minister, France

Emilio Colombo
f. Prime Minister and f. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Italy
Chairman, Foreign Affairs Committee, Bundestag, Germany

George A. Papandreu
f. Alternate Minister of Foreign Affairs, Greece
Antonio Martino
f. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Italy

Valère Vautmans
Chairman, Foreign Affairs Committee Senate, Belgium
Member, European Parliament, Finland

Jörn Donner
Member, European Parliament, Sweden

Per Stenmarck
f. Member, European Parliament, Sweden

Jas Gawronski
f. Senator, Italy

Hubert Durand Chastel
f. Senator, France

Czesław Miłosz
Nobel Prize Winner, writer
Prima Ballerina

Maya Plisetskaja
f. Prima Ballerina

Prof. Don Zagier
Director Max Planck Institute for Mathematics, Germany

Jerome Monod
President, Suez Lyonnaise des Eaux, France

Vincent Bank (Lithuania)
Hermis Bank (Lithuania)
Omniel (Lithuania)

صكنا من الامل

Winnie 'was suspected agent of apartheid police'

David Barrow
in Johannesburg

A vendetta conducted by Mrs Mandela against signatories to the statement is believed to have had a big impact on politics under majority rule. It stunted the political careers of many of the most able black leaders, including Mr Morobe and Mr Cachalia, and is thought to have contributed to the emergence of Thabo Mbeki as President Nelson Mandela's heir apparent instead of the mineworkers' leader, Cyril Ramaphosa, a signatory.

Describing the activities of the Mandela United Football Club — the gang of thugs surrounding Mrs Mandela in the 1980s — Mr Cachalia said children had disappeared from the Mandela home, and "it was unclear whether they were killed by the club, the police, or had left the country".

The club was infiltrated by police agents and "some members of the community held the view that Mrs Mandela was herself working with the police", he said. It was generally known that there were firearms and guerrillas at the Mandela home and Mrs Mandela was linked to a

string of criminal activities, yet no action was taken by the police "which, of course, fuelled the rumours around her".

Mr Cachalia urged the commission to "seriously consider making a recommendation to the effect that anyone who has been convicted of having committed a criminal offence which amounts to a gross violation of a person's human rights should not be regarded as fit to hold public office". Mrs Mandela has a conviction for kidnapping.

More damaging evidence is expected to emerge at the truth commission hearings tomorrow, with allegations that Mrs Mandela issued a "contract" for the killing of a Soweto doctor.

The second of two gunmen sentenced to death for the murder in 1989 of Dr Abu-Baker Asvat is believed to have accused Mrs Mandela of offering them 20,000 rand (2,450) to kill him. Cyril Mbebe has told lawyers that he carried out the shooting with a gun supplied by Mrs Mandela.

Mbebe's accomplice, Nicholas Dlamini, has previously said Mrs Mandela promised them R50,000 for the killing.

Both men have claimed that they were arrested before they could collect the money from Mrs Mandela.

The court found that the motive for the killing was robbery, but the Asvat family has long believed that Mrs Mandela had him killed after she had called him in to examine Stompe Seipei — the 14-year-old boy kidnapped from a Methodist manse on her instructions and subsequently found dead.

According to some accounts Dr Asvat was called in to examine the boy after he had been beaten up in Mrs Mandela's home, found he was dying and refused to treat him, insisting he should be taken to hospital. If this is true he would have been able to testify against Mrs Mandela in what was then a capital case.

Although evidence before the truth commission cannot be used in a subsequent prosecution, the commission can recommend a prosecution. Mrs Mandela has not applied for amnesty for any crimes.



A Somali refugee and her children wade through a flooded camp in Kenya. Torrential rains in East Africa over the past month have left many homeless. PHOTOGRAPH: CORINNE DUFKA

Floods take heavy toll

FURTHER 73 Somalis died in floods in the last 24 hours, bringing the toll to 1,461 killed and 230,000 displaced, the United Nations said yesterday.

The UN Somalia Inter-Agency Flood Response said in a report released in Nairobi that 20,500 livestock had also been killed since the floods started more than a month ago. About 25,000 acres of cropland had been destroyed and huge quantities of sorghum stored underground.

The agency said many roads were inaccessible, water was stagnant and outbreaks of disease were widespread.

Aid workers said the lack of a central administration in Somalia had complicated efforts to handle relief work.

The report came a day after the UN refugee agency said that 122,000 refugees, most of them Somali, in Kenya were stranded with just two weeks of food supplies after floods cut roads to their camps. — Reuters.

'Islamic terrorists' in London on Egypt's most wanted list

Julian Borger
Middle East Correspondent

EGYPT stepped up its campaign against Britain for harbouring alleged terrorists by publishing a wanted list yesterday of 14 Islamic militants, including two allegedly living in London.

The State Information Service published the list in the form of a booklet, Call to Combat Terrorism. Diplomats in Cairo interpreted the move as another attempt to improve public relations after last week's Luxor massacre of 58 tourists by Islamists.

The Egyptian president, Hosni Mubarak, denounced Britain on Sunday for "protecting killers" and so making more difficult Egypt's battle against Islamist violence.

The Home Office said last week that it was planning measures to prevent political asylum being exploited by people masterminding terrorism.

The Egyptian booklet says the wanted men "are currently enjoying secure and convenient asylum in some world capitals" and urges other countries to "work collectively to deny such terrorists any safe haven". It does not say where all the suspects are living but claims that two are living in London.

One is Yasser Tawfik Ali el-Serri, the alleged founder, manager and financier of the New Vanguard of Conquest Group, an offshoot of the radical Jihad movement, which was the target of more attacks after the Luxor massacre.

Serri was sentenced to death in 1993 for involvement in the attempted assassination of the former prime minister Ataf Sedki. In London he reportedly founded the Islamic Observation Centre, which the Egyptian government claims is the Vanguard's mouthpiece.

The other is Adel Abdel-Maguid Abdel-Bari, who was sentenced to death for trying to blow up a bus in Cairo and is also wanted for alleged involvement in the Gama'a al-Islamiya, the main outlawed militant group in Egypt. The pamphlet said he ran the International Office for the Defence of the Egyptian People, in London.

The Muslim Directory — of Islamic groups in Britain — said it had no record of the Islamic Observation Centre or the International Office.

The new supremos redraw drugs map

Others have stepped in after the defeat of Colombian cartel chiefs. From Bogotá, Jeremy Lennard and Steven Ambrus report

COLOMBIA'S most notorious drug barons are either dead or in jail, but the business that made them multimillionaires is alive and well and their lower-profile successors are proving even more elusive to law enforcement agencies.

In 1995 United States drug enforcement officials were congratulating themselves. Miguel and Gilberto Rodríguez Orejuela, leaders of the Cali cocaine cartel — the

ties intercepted an aircraft carrying 4 tons of processed cocaine from Bolivia to Mexico.

Mexico suffered a setback three months ago with the death of its top trafficker, Amado Carrillo Fuentes.

Fuentes died, or some say was killed, during a plastic surgery operation, prompting a bloody battle for power in his home city of Juárez. But intelligence sources in Colombia suggest his death has had little effect on Mexico's regional influence.

The mutilated bodies of two of the surgeons who operated on Fuentes turned up this month, embedded in concrete-filled barrels beside a motorway. US law enforcement officials commented that the savagery of Mexico's cartels now rivals that of earlier times in Colombia.

Meanwhile, Colombian traffickers, unused to their subordinate role and vastly reduced profits, are seeking out new partners to break the Mexican monopoly. As smuggling to the US becomes increasingly convoluted and expensive, many are looking to the European market, one senior intelligence source said.

In the past, the Cali cartel operated routes from Colombia's Pacific ports to Germany, the Netherlands and Spain.

They also rode piggyback on shipments from Mexican ports, and worked extensively with the Italian Mafia.

Post-Cali Colombian traffickers have set up smaller-scale routes via Argentina, Brazil and Guatemala. They have also begun to take advantage of the European connections on Caribbean islands such as Antigua, Aruba and St Martin.

The recent discovery of cocaine worth \$60 million in a shipment of cut flowers bound for Germany has resulted in the arrest of the Swiss multinational Nestlé's general manager in Guatemala, and Antigua's chief of police.

The collapse of the Soviet Union has opened up a huge narcotics market, and the Russian underworld has moved into the Caribbean to do business with the Colombians.

With the Italian Mafia weakened by a crackdown on both sides of the Atlantic in the past 20 years, the Russians — many of them former KGB experts in clandestine operations — have made worrying inroads into western Europe.

According to Interpol, they dominate arms smuggling across the continent and are well-placed to take a grip on the drugs trade. The biggest fear of anti-narcotics agents is an emerging alliance between Colombian and Russian traffickers.

The demand for heroin, which is increasing in the US and rocketing in eastern Europe, provides further cause for concern. As the US concentrates on coca eradication in Colombia, poppy cultivation has increased rapidly and Colombia has taken over from east Asia as chief supplier to the US east coast.

Heroin is worth nine times as much as cocaine, making small quantities highly profitable, and removing the need for bulk shipments. Traffickers use "mules" to carry 80 per cent of Colombia's heroin direct to the US and Europe, in their luggage or their stomachs.

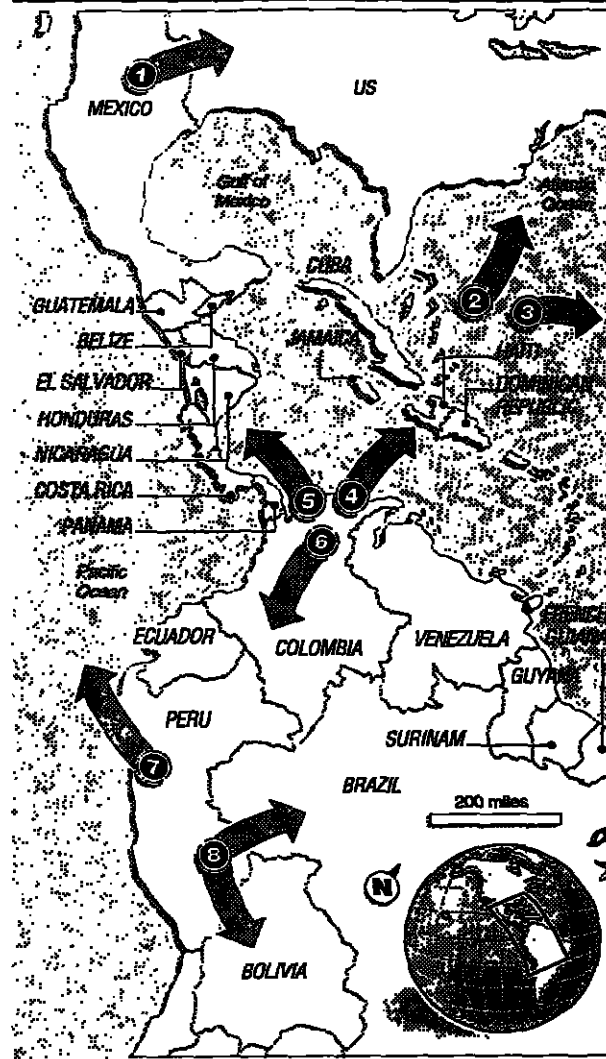
The fragmentation of the Latin American drugs industry brought about by the fall of the Rodríguez Orejuela brothers, and a move towards small-scale smuggling methods for anti-narcotics agencies around the world.

It has also generated fierce criticism of US policy in the region. Despite the war on drugs, the production of cocaine and heroin in the Andes has risen steadily in the past five years, while raw material prices have fallen.

One Colombian intelligence source likened lopping the head off the Cali cartel to taking a hammer to a blob of mercury.

"A blob of mercury is a large, single mass and easy to see," he said. "Hit it with a hammer and it splatters into tiny drops which are much more difficult to spot, but it doesn't stop being mercury."

The new smuggling routes



Key

- 1 Mexico to US, Mexican traffickers now running trade from source to sale.
- 2 Caribbean to US
- 3 Caribbean to Europe: Antigua, Aruba and St Martin have key role.
- 4 Colombia to Caribbean, key transshipment area.
- 5 Colombia to Argentina, Brazil, Guatemala and abroad. Modern traffickers setting up smaller scale routes.
- 6 Peru to California and Mexico
- 7 Peru/Bolivia to Argentina, Brazil and abroad. A new producer countries increasingly bypassing Colombia.

Good news for NatWest Card Plus customers

NatWest announces that from 1 December 1997, the interest rate for its Card Plus account for 11-20 year olds will be increased to:

Gross interest per annum*	5.00%
Gross C.A.R.**	5.12%
Net interest per annum	4.00%

* Where appropriate, lower rate tax (currently 20%) will be deducted at source from interest credited or paid (which may be reclaimed by resident non-taxpayers). Subject to the required registration form, interest will be paid gross. The Gross Rate is the rate paid before deducting income tax.

** Gross Compound Annual Rate (C.A.R.) is the rate where gross interest payments are retained in the account during the year. Rates subject to variation.

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- The increase takes effect on 1 December 1997 for loans where no notice period for rate changes is required.
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- For loans in our annual instalment review scheme, the change will be reflected in payments from March 1998.
- This notice does not apply to new variable rate loans which started on or after 20 November 1997, as they are already on the new rate, nor does it apply to mortgages with a fixed interest rate.

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Colombian troops in Huila guard a field of heroin poppies due to be destroyed by spray planes. PHOTOGRAPH: JON MITCHELL

US academe vets suspicious private donations

Colleges weigh up the price of grants

Christopher Hood
in Los Angeles

HISTORY professors at the University of California at Los Angeles will review a \$1 million (\$800,000) grant offer next month — and may decide not to accept it.

The dilemma is the latest example of how higher education establishments in the United States are becoming extremely cautious about the generosity of foreign governments and foundations, as well as domestic sources. Too often the offers contain a not-so-hidden agenda, as academe is pushed into the arms of private donors to augment dwindling government funding.

The Turkish embassy announced last month that UCLA had accepted a \$250,000 advance to endow a professorship of Turkish and Ottoman history. The programme was limited to scholars with "cordial relations with academic circles in Turkey" and "whose published works are based on extensive use of archives and libraries in Turkey".

Some Armenian scholars thought this meant that Ankara wanted to promote its version of history between 1915 and 1923, when 1 million Armenians were massacred by Ottoman Turks. Ankara still denies genocide and says the dead were war casualties.

Now the UCLA history faculty will review the grant, a long process involving various university officials up to the president. "It could take a whole academic year, and the

grant could be cancelled at any time if there is any concern about compromising academic standards," a UCLA spokesman said.

The university is mindful of Princeton's experience last year, when it accepted \$750,000 to endow a chair in Turkish studies. A hundred scholars and authors, led by the poet Peter Balakian and including Norman Mailer, Arthur Miller, Susan Sontag and Kurt Vonnegut, signed a

'I cannot think of a bigger sin than letting objectivity and standards be compromised'

petition accusing Ankara of trying to manipulate Princeton into "fraudulent scholarship".

The University of California at Berkeley also provoked criticism when it submitted a proposal for a \$3 million grant from the Taiwanese Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation, named after the country's late president. He was the son of the Chinese Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek.

The foundation would appear in the curriculum as sponsoring a "Chinese humanistic studies research programme", said Professor Fred Wakeman, director of Berkeley's Institute of East Asian Studies. "It's a foundation like any other, and we would accept as long as we

maintained academic independence."

However, Taiwan now seems to be considering other US universities.

Yale recently rejected two proposed grants. One came from the billionaire Bass family in Texas, who offered \$20 million to fund a Western civilisation programme. The donor insisted on vetting any faculty member, and that was unacceptable.

Then the AIDS activist and playwright Larry Kramer, a Yale graduate, offered \$5 million to fund "in perpetuity" a "gay studies" department. The university decided that studying homosexuality "for ever" as Mr Kramer demanded was unreasonable.

Corporations often seek favourable treatment for grants. Yale has been accused of accepting a multi-million-dollar grant from Intel, the electronics firm associated with Bill Gates's Microsoft, at the expense of its rival, Apple, the traditional supplier of computers on campus.

The economics professor Morton Schapiro, a dean at the University of Southern California, in Los Angeles, said: "Certainly, many donors have their own agenda, and it's not just political attitudes. They may want the research done in a particular way. Lots of governments want to get their word out or their spin on history, and gifts free of strings are less common these days."

"But I cannot think of a bigger sin in higher education than letting objectivity and academic standards be compromised in this way."



A group of Saddam Hussein's 'Suicide Fedayeen', set up to defend Iraq against US attack, parade in Baghdad yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH: KARIM SAHIB

Saddam's palaces stay off limits to inspectors

SADDAM HUSSEIN'S palaces remain off limits to United Nations arms inspectors, the Iraqi foreign minister, Mohammed Saeed al-Sahaf, said yesterday.

On Wednesday the Iraqi News Agency, INA, reported that the government was opening the palaces to inter-

national experts and diplomats to disprove the "wave of false allegations" that they were being used to hide chemical and biological weapons.

Mr Sahaf made it clear the invitation did not extend to the UN monitors in Iraq to get rid of its weapons of mass destruction.

These "sovereign sites" had been outside the scope of the inspectors work from the beginning.

He added: "It is an Iraqi wish, it is an Iraqi initiative, it is an Iraqi suggestion, to have full and complete transparency with the world... to see the facts as they are

regarding the sovereign sites in Iraq."

Access to the palaces — Washington says there are 78 of them — has become the key issue between Iraq and the UN. A White House official said the inspectors must have "unconditional and unfettered access". — Agencies.

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Work-stressed women heed the call of the wild

James Barron in Warwick, New York, reports on the growing pack of hunters

THE holder of New York State hunting licence number 277036 had trudged through the woods, the noise alerting deer for miles around to the annual invasion of two-legged creatures with guns. Then came hours of sitting on a tiny chair nailed high up a tree, waiting, watching and not firing a shot.

Putting down a loaded rifle and peeling off an orange vest, 277036 sounded like any other hunter complaining at the end of a bad day during the deer-hunting season, which began last week. Except that this hunter was a woman.

"It's like marathons," said Katherine Fiduccia, aged 36, a freelance videographer who teaches rifle shooting at state workshops. "They know they're not going to win. It's the being there that matters."

"Hunting is the same. And, when your normal day is go, go, go, hunting season is when you know you'll have several hours a day of peace and quiet away from work stress, household stress or whatever."

Women have become the fastest-growing group among hunters, reviving a million-dollar industry that was in danger of stagnating as fewer men ap-

plied for licences. It has affected everything from the way hunting equipment is designed to the way couples relate to each other.

Mrs Fiduccia's husband, Peter, the host of a hunting show on cable television, said he knows couples who stop talking to each other when the season begins.

The National Shooting

'I was a real softie about animals. What changed? I know more about the world now'

Sports Foundation, a firearms industry group that promotes outdoor sports, says 49 per cent more women are now licensed to hunt with guns than in 1988, with 25 per cent of them having obtained licences in the past two years.

The Federal Fish and Wildlife Service agrees that more women are hunting than ever before, although its figures are lower than the foundation's. The agency says 100,000 more women have hunting licences than in 1991. In that

time, it says, 200,000 men let theirs expire.

Officials say the ranks of hunters have changed as the number of single mothers has increased. "It's more normal for male children to be asked to join the dad or the grandfather or the uncle on a hunt than it is for the women," said Laurie Pettigrew, a co-ordinator of New Jersey's workshops for prospective outdoorwomen. "All these roles are changing as we go through the 1990s."

Ms Pettigrew, aged 41, said her grandfather and father were avid hunters and fishermen, and her younger brother accompanied them. "I don't think I'd have gone if I'd been asked," she said. "I was a real softie as far as animals are concerned."

"What changed? I got older. I know more about the world now."

Not all men are enthusiastic about women hunting. "I've heard both sides," said Chris Chaffin, a spokesman for the National Shooting Sports Foundation. "You get a certain percentage of hunters who would just as soon keep it a good old boys' club, and you get just as many saying this is wonderful."

"Hunting has always been a family tradition, so a lot of folks are thrilled to see the number of women increasing." — New York Times.

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Analysis Children's rights

A law unto themselves

We say they shouldn't buy cigarettes until they're 18, but for gay sex 16 is fine. Why are we so inconsistent about our young people? By **Stuart Millar and Sarah Boseley**

LIFE can be tough when you're a teenager. You feel weird, your best friends appear weird, and your body does weird things still. At this age the world holds enough confusion to tempt most teenagers to lock themselves in their rooms only to appear when they've turned 21.

So spare a thought this week for Britain's young people, for whom life looks certain to become even more chaotic. Once again, newspapers have been filled with headlines detailing policies that reveal the fundamental confusion at the heart of the State over its approach to the nation's children.

Yesterday Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, visited an east London youth project as he prepared to issue a new set of measures designed to improve public safety. These will include curfew schemes that will include curfew schemes to keep children under the age of 10 off the streets at night, and the replacement of repeat cautioning with a new final warning. More strikingly, the package will abolish the rule of *doli incapax*, which presumes that a child under 14 does not know the difference between right and wrong and is thus incapable of committing a crime. If implemented, it will mean that it will no longer be necessary for the prosecution to prove that they knew the consequences.

For a Government which makes much of the merits of a society which balances rights and responsibilities, Straw's white paper is yet more evidence of its predilection for piling responsibility on to young people while doing little to give them greater rights. Also this week we heard that the Government is determined to equalise the age of consent at 16, in line with a ruling from the European Court of Human Rights. But before 16-year-olds get too excited at the apparent new freedom they can expect, they should bear in mind a parallel move which would be comical if it did not reveal so much about Britain's confused approach to children. With the laudable aim of cutting smoking among teenagers, the legal age for buying tobacco is to be raised from 16 to 18. Soon they should be able to engage in homosexual sex acts legally but afterwards, 16-year-olds will be barred from enjoying a cigarette they had purchased.

The confusion does not stop there. At the same time, ministers are considering raising the age of consent from 16 to 18 for relationships between teenagers and adults in "positions of authority" such as teachers or care workers. Yet it is legal to marry — not to mention enter cohabitation in a brothel — from the age of 16.

These are just a few of the examples which demonstrate

the anomalies and inconsistencies which riddle the legal status of young people. There are the ridiculous ones, like being able to work in a mine at 16 but not get a tattoo until 18. Or being liable for tax from 16 but having no say in how it is spent until the vote arrives at 18. The list is startling in its attention to ludicrous detail.

It should not be so, given all our politicians' fine words and agreements to protect and empower children. In 1989, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child for the first time recognised in law that children are the holders of a specific body of identifiable rights — not only involving prevention, protection and provision, but also, crucially, participation. All member states of the EU have ratified the convention, obliging them under international law to implement its principles(1).

A year later, 71 world leaders at the World Summit on Children in New York endorsed the new emphasis on youth rights. "The well-being of children requires political action at the highest level," they stated. "We are determined to make a solemn commitment to give priority to the rights of the child."(2)

YET seven years on, massive legal inconsistencies remain not only in Britain but across the EU. Scandinavia stands virtually alone in addressing children's civil rights, although both Germany and Belgium have dabbled. Elsewhere there is a hodge-podge of responsibilities and rights, age limits and anachronisms.

But nowhere is the legal view of children more muddled or arbitrary than in Britain. Unfortunately the potential for reform has been tempered by the persistent view that young people are potential law-breakers who require ever-greater responsibility to keep them in check, rather than full citizens whose views on issues concerning them deserve to be heard.

Roger Smith, head of policy at the Children's Society points out that in criminal-justice measures especially children are increasingly being given adult responsibilities. In return the age of consent may be liberalised, but in most other areas nothing is happening.

"It is partly to do with what is unquestionably the pragmatic approach that the Government is taking," he says. "They are looking at quick solutions and what works." A theme running through Labour's attitude is, he believes, "a greater willingness to intervene" — using measures such as parenting orders and curfews to determine not only what children can and cannot do, but also to a great degree



What you can do when

in Britain you have these rights and obligations at the following ages:

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- 6 You can get a passport without your parents' consent.
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- 8 You can get a passport without your parents' consent.
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opportunities extend to the point of the local authority, being:

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how family life should be conducted. Yet while there appears to be an increasing emphasis on the responsibilities of children, there is no counterbalancing focus on increasing their rights. "If you are being a nuisance, you are treated as having adult responsibilities," Smith says. "But you are not supposed to express an opinion about what goes on in schools, for instance."

While individual schools might do a lot to encourage children to play a role in decision-making, there are few formal mechanisms to involve children in the running of their education. Yet the Children's Society has found through its projects that even five and six-year-olds will participate in discussions about things familiar to them and offer an opinion of their own.

MOST of the children's organisations would like to see more representation for children's interests at government level. Children cannot influence society until they are able to vote. Some groups argue for the voting age to be 16 — since by then they can marry and have children or join the Army. At the very least, lobbyists for children would like a minister specifically to look after children's interests. Failing that they would like a commissioner who would exercise influence in government circles but be independent.

"Commissioners have been established in a number of other countries with some success," says Roger Smith. "It is something that can give a fairly powerful independent voice for children."

What would most children say, for instance, if asked about curfews? How would they feel about such a restriction being imposed without it being first discussed with them? They would feel they were being punished even though most had not come close to committing a crime. And if you asked them why they were rowdy and anti-social late into the night, they would probably say they were bored. If you asked the children, further, what would stop them behaving badly, they might ask for a club or youth centre or football pitch.

They also might not. But then nobody is asking.

See pages 11-12 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989; (2) Children in Europe (NCH Action for Children, 1996).

Graphics sources: Age breakdown from The Children's Legal Centre's publication *At What Age Can I?* (23, cheque to Children's Legal Centre, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester CO4 3SQ). The centre runs a national advice line: 01206 873620. For further information on Scotland, the Scottish Child Law Centre in Glasgow operates two advice lines: 0800 317500 (for under-18s) and 0141 2263737 (for adults). European comparisons are taken from Children in Europe, by Sandy Ruxton (NCH Action for Children, 225). Further material from the National Youth Agency and the British Youth Council. See also Matt Buck, Finbar Sheehy, Researcher Matt Keating, Stuart Millar and Sarah Boseley are Guardian reporters.

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Enter the minimum wage

What about a maximum wage increase as well?

YESTERDAY'S bill paving the way for a national minimum wage marks a milestone in British labour history. It will end what Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, called the scandal of poverty pay. The NMW will also, rightly, be fixed at the same rate for the whole country so that no employer will be in any doubt at all about what the minimum is. All that needs to be decided now is whether companies employing youngsters should be exempted from the provisions and — critically — whether the rate should be nearer the TUC's £4 plus an hour or below the CBI's ceiling of £3.20p. Both of these will be considered in great detail by the Low Pay Commission under the chairmanship of Professor George Bain which will report in time for the minimum to be in operation by April, 1999.

It is true that if the minimum wage is fixed too high it could result in job losses but this should not be used as an excuse for fixing it too low. If people are laid off because their employer is unable to afford a liveable wage then maybe that sort of job would be better done elsewhere anyway. As Mrs Beckett commented, Britain cannot and should not compete on low wages alone, we must also compete on quality. As it happens the introduction of the minimum wage is rather well timed. It is happening when the country is in danger of running into labour shortages and, happily, will coincide with the Government's welfare-to-work initiative which will give those who lose their jobs an opportunity to retrain for something better.

There is one reservation. The Government has a bold minimum wage policy but not a maximum wage policy. Figures by the Monks partnership published yesterday show that industry's fat cats had another good year. Basic salaries for directors in 1,100 top com-

panies went up by 6.3 per cent last year and total earnings by 8.6 per cent. This was almost twice the rise in average earnings for the whole population. And, of course, percentages conceal the fact that a 4 per cent increase for someone earning £1 million is worth £40,000 but only £800 for someone on £20,000. When increases like these are published they suddenly become "the going rate" when remuneration committees meet to decide pay increases for directors. Yet those same directors wouldn't dream of accepting the concept of the going rate when setting pay increases on the shop floor. The question of top pay is not an academic one. Gordon Brown warned earlier this week that responsible pay settlements were vital if the Government was to achieve sustained growth and employment. He added that this meant responsibility not just on the shop floor but also from the boardrooms "where in the interests of all there must be moderation not excess and where an example should be set".

What can be done? In practical terms not a lot because mechanisms don't exist for capping top pay; and any talk of turning Mr Brown's exhortation into a general incomes policy would be regarded as the unwelcome reappearance of a ghost from the sixties. But there is nothing to stop employers agreeing among themselves not to award directors more than the average increases granted to the workforce at large. This would still enable them to play the percentages game but it would at least remove some of the excessive awards of recent years that have so damaged directors in the eyes of their employees and the world at large. If business is about leadership, directors should show an example from the front. Who knows some companies might even use some of the money saved from boardroom salaries to finance the extra cost of the minimum wage.

The hunt for a new solution

Wanted: a countryside policy that doesn't involve the fox

TODAY Labour's 400-plus MPs will experience an unusual sensation. They will go through the division lobby directed not by the party whips, but by their own consciences. They will have a free vote on The Wild Mammals (Hunting with Dogs) Bill, the private member's legislation which seeks to outlaw the bloodsport once and for all. Even though government managers have said they won't make parliamentary time for the bill — ensuring its eventual death — today's free vote matters. We hope MPs use it wisely.

The hunting debate has been one of the perennials of British politics, running on and on for decades. But the arguments have been put with extra force this time round. Defenders of the hunt have presented their activity not as a leisure pursuit but a way of life, a rural tradition threatened by the hectoring, domineering forces of the city. The tactic has been effective. The huntsmen have won new friends as previously-hostile liberals, anxious to stand with the latest misunderstood minority, have championed the right of the countryside to preserve its customs and culture. The economic argument has cut some ice, too. No-one wants livelihoods to be lost, or for an already beleaguered rural economy to be dealt an extra blow. Nor can civil libertarians take much pleasure in banning any human activity, however unappealing it might be to majority opinion.

These are all powerful arguments, and they should give MPs at least

pause. Still, they can be answered. The countryside does need help, but hunting cannot be the solution. This newspaper has called before for a full rural policy which would include conservation, organic farming, tree-planting and a new approach to work and housing. If today's rural economy genuinely does depend on hunting, as some campaigners say, then the case for change is only enhanced. We accept, too, the farmers' view that foxes need to be culled. But that's no excuse for pursuing an animal to an agonising death — not when more humane methods are available. Even the civil liberties argument does not survive much scrutiny. After all, few of us would defend the right of enthusiasts to bring back cock-fighting or bear-baiting.

Those so-called sports were banned because they debased the society which allowed them to take place. We know that animals are routinely cruel to each other. But for human beings to take pleasure from that cruelty seems drastically out of place in a civilized society. One could go further, insisting that it is our very refusal to indulge such base appetites that distinguishes the human from the animal. One does not have to be engaged with class envy to feel that way. MPs should vote instead with their consciences. Once they have, the Government should listen. If that means finding enough parliamentary time next year, then so be it. The hunt for a ban has come this far; it should be allowed to move in for the kill.

A hole in David Blunkett's bucket

And top-up fees may be the least worst option of filling it

ONE part of the higher education revolution is well known: the doubling of school leavers going on to higher education from 15 to 30 per cent within eight years. Less well known is a more interesting statistic: a survey which suggests six out of 10 people over their lifetime are now likely to participate in higher education. On top of school leavers are a growing number of mature students (14 per cent) and a further 20 per cent of part-time mature students. The universities to which they are heading have had a tough time. Mass higher education has meant they receive 40 per cent less per student compared to 20 years ago. Next year's funding crisis has been partially averted by the Education Secretary with the £165 million extra announced at the Labour Party conference but there remains a hole in David Blunkett's bucket: how are the universities going to benefit from the new £1,000

fees, if initially the students will be taking out loans to cover them. When the loans begin to be paid back, clearly there will be extra money. But what happens in the meantime? Yesterday's white paper ducks this awkward issue. Universities want to fill the gap with top-up fees. David Blunkett is opposed for fear of "distorting access". But students from poor homes could — and should — be exempted against all fees and maintenance. If the Government is serious about its goals of improving the quality of higher education, then universities must have more funds. Ministers are right to want to widen access. But the extra money to achieve this is likely to concentrate at the lower end of the university league table, which is more ready to accept poor grades and borderline students. The other end also needs help. Top-up fees are the least worst option. The idea needs regulation, not rejection.



Letters to the Editor

To charge or not to charge?

TIME and time again we read unsubstantiated assertions that admission charges reduce visitor numbers. Your article (Museums count on Blair to veto entry fees, November 25) is no exception.

You declare, for example, that visitor numbers at The Natural History Museum have fallen from 2.5 million per year in 1987 when admission charges were introduced to 1.8 million today. The truth is that the number of visitors to The Natural History Museum today is accurately known because they are counted individually as they receive an entrance ticket. Before the Museum charged for admission it estimated numbers by eye, and these estimates were almost certainly wildly exaggerated. We know this because The Natural History Museum is simply incapable of holding 2.5 million visitors per year.

In short, we simply do not know whether the introduction of charging at The Natural History Museum reduced visitor numbers or not. Those of the Museum's staff who have been here since the early 1980s say that it is as busy today as it has ever been.

There are two lessons to be drawn for museums and a message for Government: first, count your visitors with

equal rigour whether or not you charge for admission; second, do not base policy on inadequate data. The message to Government — do not remove the ability to charge for admission from those national museums that charge at present. The loss of this revenue without full financial compensation would be disastrous. Galleries would close, collections would deteriorate, research and scholarship would decline.

Dr Neil R Chalmers, The Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD.

DAN GLAISTER is absolutely right about falling visitor numbers when museums introduce charges. Museum records on visitor numbers reveal an average of 40 per cent drop in visitor numbers to charging museums. This

contradicts both the recent research carried out for the Museums and Galleries Commission and current Government statements on charging. Jan Woolf, RECTU, and three others, 1 Wardour Street, London W1.

DAN GLAISTER implies that the research into admission charges which we commissioned advocates the introduction of charging. This is not the case. The Museums and Galleries Commission is committed to the principle of access for everyone to museums and galleries.

Furthermore, it believes that access to major publicly funded museums and galleries should be free if at all possible. No funding authority should put pressure on a museum to introduce charges in order to meet basic

requirements. It must remain the right of any individual museum and its governing body to decide whether to impose admission charges or not. Timothy Mason, Director, Museums & Galleries Commission, 16 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AA.

MANY, possibly most, visitors to any great museum anywhere are visitors from abroad, who are only able to visit once, whose own taxes have not contributed to the museum, and who expect to spend money while on holiday. Why should they not spend some of it on the museum?

Here in the Netherlands, virtually all museums levy a charge. However, the frequent visitor to museums, whether a resident or a regular traveller from abroad, can buy for less than the price of a good meal an annual card which gives free admission to all publicly funded museums in the country. Thus the tourists pay up and everyone else, in effect, gets in free. Gyan Mathur, Amsterdam.

Please include a full postal address. We may edit letters: shorter ones are more likely to appear. We regret we cannot acknowledge letters.

On tax and working wives

YOUR reports yesterday on the proposed working families' tax credit are simply wrong (Tax threat to working women, November 27). Low-income couples do not enjoy independent assessment today. Family credit is calculated on joint incomes, just as a working families' tax credit would be. There is no need to scrap independent taxation for tax-paying couples at all.

Because women are the majority of low-paid workers qualifying for family credit, a tax credit would simply give them a higher pay packet. For the minority, a tax credit would mean less money for the woman — exactly what happens if a man who is unemployed or low-paid manages to get a well-paid job. Instead of bosses "asking you who you were sleeping with" ("Credit's debit side"), tax credits would be calculated by the Benefits Agency (like family credit) or Inland Revenue (like tax codes).

Together with a minimum wage, a family tax credit offers the prospect of making work pay — and making sense of the present chaos of tax and benefits.

Patricia Hewitt MP, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.

WHY should I, simply because I am married, be expected to pay more in tax than a single person? It is not that I resent contributing to the state, indeed I am a loud advocate of increasing income tax to pay for the urgent funding needed in health, welfare and education. However, it seems that, rather than find a system which will overcome the few anomalies presented by the low income tax credit, it is easier to treat working married women as second class citizens.

K Johnson, Keele University, Keele, Staffs.

YOUR headline is based on several false assumptions: that all working women are wives, and that all wives' earnings are secondary in the family income. (The third assumption, that higher taxation on higher incomes is to be deplored, is a separate issue.) May we hope at least that women will cease to be marginalised by headline-writers when the current generation of schoolgirls takes their predominance over their male counterparts into the labour market?

Jenny Woodhouse, 24 Hurst Park Avenue, Cambridge CB4 2AE.

Reputations

READ with interest Richard Hall's obituary of Hastings East of Sunderland (November 27) and found it a fair summary of the peculiar career of a very peculiar man. I feel, however, that the piece does a disservice to many of the whites present in Malawi at the time of independence, where it is above that "time" of Malawi settlers and servants alike — were all behind the little doctor?

My parents (white) were not unique when they had to flee Malawi in 1965 to avoid arrest, nor were the actions of his white opponents forgotten by Banda.

Before leaving for the Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh in 1970, Malawian athletes were warned by Banda not to speak to my father, a warden at the student accommodation used as the games village. Being described as "a hyena, even whose saliva is poison" is something that my father is quite proud of, I think, but being told that he and like-minded whites were behind Banda in his seizure of power is insulting.

N Diarmid Ross, 70 Ratcliffe Terrace, Edinburgh EH9 1ST.

FRANCIS Wheen's article on Max Mosley's youthful anti-immigration leafletting unwittingly reveals something else (Wheen's World, November 26). He refers to an occasion when Max's elderly father was knocked to the ground and assaulted by a mob. Instead of rescuing the victim, the police stopped anyone from doing so. My recollection of an extraordinary TV news-film is that old Mosley managed to struggle upright above his attackers, barged towards his speaking platform, and was then threatened with arrest if he spoke!

Now we learn that when Gerry Gable threw a milk bottle churn in front of Max's moving car, a police witness also refused to take action. Mr Gable seems to have had a free hand, or a light punishment menu, for quite a number of "anti-fascist actions" over many years.

Presumably the police were under Home Office orders not to prevent criminal injury against Mosley, nor to deal with its perpetrators. Name and address supplied.

Unfair to transsexuals

AS one of the "vulnerable" that Metropolitan Police Commander Tony Rowe is trying to help with a "partnership approach", I applaud any measures brought in by police forces to help reduce bigotry and homophobic intolerance by police officers (Rights side of the law, Society, November 26).

It does seem a shame though, that the definition of exactly who constitute these "vulnerable groups" and who therefore will be helped, is somewhat selective. I have just been asked by my police force of the last eight years because I am transsexual. My force insists that I am now unable to fulfil all the duties of a constable, as among other things, they insist I cannot now eat. I have been transsexual since birth, and managed perfectly well in my duties before. Gay and lesbian officers are allowed to search persons of the same biological sex, but transsexual is not allowed to search either. One last point, if transsexuals cannot search anyone, what right have the police to search transsexual citizens? Yet more double standards.

Name and address supplied.

I THINK Manchester Chief Constable David Wilnot will have to do a lot more than the walkabout you mentioned to quell gay fears. Just three years ago, around 40 officers mounted an horrific commando-style raid on one of the city's gay night clubs, The Minershaft. I was among the 14 people they arrested and held all night without clothes and in heavy handcuffs inside a secure room where officers stood guard. We were warned not to speak, refused use of the toilet, paddled around publicly, and subjected to numerous other indignities.

I know of two men whose careers have been blighted as a result of their arrest. I too have been left with nightmares and, indeed, very nearly committed suicide. Part of my left wrist is permanently numb after nerves were damaged by the handcuffs.

Until such laws, which are used exclusively against gay, are repealed, the police will use them, no matter how many token gay officers are appointed. Barrie Redfern, Knot House, London SE1.

Care deficit

SIMON Hoggart (Sketch, November 27) is quite right: the well-being of disabled people is not something to which the last Tory Government paid much attention. Nor the well-being of their carers either. I took early retirement, with a small pension at 51, to look after my wife. For doing this I got ICA and NI credits. Then, last month, my wife died. The allowances all stopped immediately (apart from Disability Living Allowance — which stops in the week before you die). Now, the last time I was unemployed, at 51, I had over 20 years' NI contributions behind me and so was eligible for unemployment benefit.

This time, after 12 years of caring, I have no recent NI contributions and so do not get Job Seekers Allowance. Nor was I allowed to use my ICA over the 12 years to help boost my pension — I had repeatedly asked my (Tory) MP to press the (Tory) Government on this, but never even got a reply. Peter West, Ilkley, West Yorkshire.

A Country Diary

NORTHUMBERLAND: Gaining a shoulder of high ground on my walk up Cheviot, I pause and tell the labradors how good they have been, keeping close in to heel. Above us is the bald head of Cheviot, a plateau riven with peat bogs and with rank heather and wiry yellow grass. Rocky outcrops on these hills are known locally as "glitters". I have climbed Cheviot from all sides and my favourite walk is by the path to the west of the dour Bizzle ravine. These border hills are rich in ancient earthworks, Iron Age hillforts and homesteads. My father took us frequently up the Benhole route following the College burn, a wild chasm with black cliffs rising steeply to a height of over 200ft on either side but it is too lonely and steep for me on a November day. It was at the Benhole, I saw a great grey shrike, an annual visitor to Cheviot, a black and grey bird with prominent dark eye-stripe, perched on top of a 10-foot pine tree. Today I am

hoping to see waxwings, an arctic nesting species which visit us only in winter. No luck with waxwings, but I see a bird of passage on this occasion, a magnificent hen harrier. On a short winter afternoon, soon I had to head downhill, where I came upon a shepherd on his bike looking to the sheep. His collies were checking the blackface sheep on the fell, the man with a cigarette in one side of his mouth and breath enough to whistle out of the other. An hour later and I am enjoying a cup of tea with a friend at her farm in the College valley. Her grandson showed me his bantams. "I have to go to school I so I live in Wooler," he explained. "So I keep them at granny's house." I admired his colourful, cheerful bunch of fowl of doubtful pedigree, the hens brave mothers, the diminutive cocks, hell-bent on competing for territory with the full-sized birds in the farmyard.

VERONICA HEATH

Diary

Emily Barr

If you have a Labour MP, check the local paper to see what he or she said about the budget. At a guess, it might go something like this: "The Pre-Budget Report shows how the Government is building long-term prosperity blah blah." Yes, a new MP has left a document, given to all Blair's boys and girls, in a Commons bar. The press release, delightfully headed "Local MP... Says Chancellor's Pre-Budget Report is Good News For...", begins with the news that "Local MP... today welcomed the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown's Pre-Budget Report. S/he said... This year and next, 6-7 pensioners in... will benefit from the £20 fuel payment for all pensioner households." Furthermore, "The... long-term unemployed in... will also benefit from the state of the New Deal." This, of course, is what Helen Brinton meant when she said "we are all speaking with one voice, and that is Mandy's great achievement". The final sentence is "My favourite... This Pre-Budget Report, your MP will have told local press in... (unless s/he is very off-message), "shows we can put behind us the years of Tory boom and bust and build for the long term, benefiting all the people of..."

A SPECIAL prize for linguistic clarity is hereby awarded to Bert Hardy, chief executive of the Sunday Business and European newspapers, who talks to Campaign magazine about the Sunday Business launch next year. "We are not looking beyond the launch at this point," he says, "but we wouldn't be getting into bed before getting out again." Aha. In a answer for meaning, he called Dr Rosemary Stevenson, a reader in Psychology at Durham University's Human Communication Research Centre. "It's nonsense," she confirmed. "You can't get out of bed before you've got in, can you? Unless you were already in bed the night before." How true.

LIVE Needle MEP writes from Brussels enclosing a page from the report of the 1995 Standing Conference on HIV/AIDS. A speaker addressing the conference on "The British Parliamentary Experience" says: "The basic remit of the All-Party Group is in fact to remind people in Britain, and particularly in Parliament, that even the British are at risk from Aids, because, and it may come as a shock to some people here, the British do have sex occasionally." Some people in Parliament (until recently) have needed no reminding of that fact, and the speaker, Peter Merchant, is arguably one of them.

ADMITTEDLY, it hasn't been easy for an au pair agency lately, but there is no need for the resigned attitude of a classified ad in TNT magazine. "Tearful efficient person required," it begins, "to work in an au pair agency in NW1." "Actually, we haven't had any response at all," says a woman who answered the phone at the Personal Au Pair agency, and who had not seen the magazine. So here is an appeal: If any lachrymose, yet efficient, readers think they can handle the pressure, call 0171 383 5581.

If Mr Tony Blair is feeling glum at the end of the honeymoon, he must look at the letters page of the North Wales Weekly News, for Counsellor SR Vig has sent in a tribute to the whole world. "he writes, 'heard and witnessed the inspiration of God, shining through the Rt Hon Tony Blair, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Commonwealth and the Great Power of the World... The Rt Hon Tony Blair's statement will be deemed most noble, humanitarian and compassionate in the history books of the world and will be a reference point in the world, in the new millennium'. We are photocopying this 418 times and sending it to every Labour MP under the heading: 'Press release... praises satirist Blair'."

I AM interested in a paper called "How to achieve 20% CO2 reduction targets". The answer, I feel, may lie in the name of the author, Dr David Carless.

THE CITY STILL HAS ALL THE INTEGRITY MONEY CAN BUY.



Children may suffer from this tax plan



Decca Aitkenhead

"MY concern," sighed the woman down the end of the phone, "is that people don't pick up on something like this till it's too late. It's too complex, and it doesn't look very interesting. By the time everyone realises what it means, the deed's done. And you feel like saying, 'But I told you so.' Oh yes, I blushed, with completely cod complexity, and replaced the receiver. The Chancellor's speech had been delivered, and I'd thought a lot about chilly pensioners and after-school clubs. Considerably more, as it happened, than about Working Family Tax Credit. The director of the Child Poverty Action Group had been right to worry that jargon-added tax adjustments sound boring. She was also right to point out how much they matter. At first, Brown's plan looked fair enough. Rather

than give poorly paid parents an extra hand-out called Family Credit, the state would provide a tax credit. A family would receive its income supplement in the pay cheque, as opposed to the giro cheque, thus breaking away from (cue buzz phrase) "the welfare dependency culture". The main objection on the right was that it was all very well, but didn't actually make much difference — the government would still be doling out disincentives to poor people to work harder.

That the state would continue to support families in badly paid jobs, is, thankfully, true. The idea that it makes no difference is nonsense. A feminist problem with the plan was soon apparent. A typist should hardly enjoy a tax break to help feed her kids, if her husband's a company director. So it was assumed by yesterday that the scheme would mean the scrapping of individual taxation — in short, a return to a state of affairs where husbands signed all the forms, and wives had no right to financial privacy.

Only months ago, Harriet Harman, Minister with responsibility for women, was insisting this was "not on the agenda". It still may not be. Patricia Hewitt was hopping mad at the suggestion yesterday, claiming the credit would in practice only apply to single income households;

once the minimum wage was in place, two salaries would inevitably push the family's earnings too high to qualify. Nothing need change. But this is not yet an official policy announcement. A rumoured alternative is that only women wanting their families to receive the tax credit will have to forgo individual taxation — a rather neat-looking compromise, unless of course you are uneasy with the idea that rich women can enjoy financial respect,

but that poor women don't deserve it.

So far, the argument could still look like one of those angry feminist points of order. Many women, including some who fought the campaign for independent taxation, have started saying we shouldn't get hung up on some feminist principle when what really matters is getting money into low income families. Why not be done with it, and have an egalitarian tax arrangement across the board, with just one form which a husband and wife sign jointly?

If the only problem here were one of tedious feminist face-saving, this wouldn't be a bad solution. Unfortunately,

it's more complicated. The whole point of the plan is to get money coming in through the pay cheque, and not at the post office — but in the vast majority of couples' cases this will mean the money going to the man, not the woman. As Brown's very own advisor, Ed Balls, wrote in a Guardian article three years ago, all the evidence shows that the main carer, the mother, spends more of her income on her children than does the father. So if the purpose of the credit is to get money to children, it makes little sense to give it to the family member most likely to spend it on himself. Full-time mothers will be back in the pitiable position of having to hope their husbands don't feel like spending the housekeeping down the pub.

The tax credit scheme was dreamed up in the US, where hostility to anything called a hand-out is matched only by wild enthusiasm for tax breaks. As a result, it proved

change would mean one less benefit cheque, and a bigger pay packet — a psychological improvement we all recognise. And as for married women, Patricia Hewitt was having no time for "that old moving money from purse to wallet" argument.

"If a couple were on family credit, and the man got a better paid job, the woman would stop getting family credit," she argued. "This is in effect what we're proposing. Are we saying we'd rather she carried on getting giro cheques, and he didn't earn more?"

Clearly, where a husband earns a good salary, the state has no right to intervene to make sure his family sees some of it. But when the money is coming from the state, and is meant for the children, it has a responsibility to target it as best it can. Family Credit has its flaws; it could, for example, be adjusted to minimise any disincentive to earn more. But it is recognised as an unusually successful system. Why bother to replace it?

"My real worry," remarked Pam Meadows, director of the Policy Studies Institute, "is that there is no good case for change. It's about nothing but re-labelling." And in part, Brown would agree. The two systems achieve much the same: what counts is the symbolic impact of the low paid seeing rewards from hard work, not post office queues. It is an estimable goal.

But one can't help suspecting Brown has his eye on another symbolic impact — that on middle England of a Labour Chancellor abolishing benefits in favour of tax breaks. The proper challenge for a Chancellor in search of the unthinkable, would surely be to convince middle England of the value of the welfare state. To buy Daily Mail approval with the purse of poor mothers and their children is a shabby exchange.

The telephone rang unexpectedly, leaving over to answer it Ms Sparks inadvertently struck the edge of her coffee cup with a loose bit of cardigan hanging from her left elbow. This caused the cup's contents to spill over a freshly laundered cotton tablecloth which she had purchased only three months before in an August sale at her local Debenhams. Despite repeated visits to her laundry, the coffee stains have remained on the tablecloth in question ever since.

Ms Sparks's first reaction was to take the cotton tablecloth back to her local Debenhams. But after repeated inquiries the store's Consumer Complaints officer informed her that as they had at no time advertised the tablecloth in question as stainproof, there was nothing they could do about it. This prompted Ms Sparks to take her problem to the Spring Clothing Company, manufacturers of the cardigan that had proved so loose-fitting that she had brushed the coffee cup against it, causing the spillage. But the company denied all responsibility. "Once the garment is purchased," an official informed her, "it becomes the responsibility of the wearer."

At this point, Ms Sparks could have been forgiven for imagining that she was the fly caught in the centre of a web

The scandal of Ms Sparks's coffee stains



Bel Littlejohn

O KAY, so we've got a Labour government, and that's great, but there's still a lot of terrible, terrible things going on in this world of ours. Only last week, a reader bought a new cordless telephone in which the batteries were not included. And there's worse. I'm talking Consumer Problems. And I make no apology if the tale I have to tell brings tears to your eyes.

In October of this year, Ms Pauline Sparks of Runcorn bought a new kettle from her local branch of Rumbelows. All went well until 11.15 am on November 3. Feeling like a refreshing pick-me-up cup of decaffeinated coffee, Ms Sparks pressed the prominently displayed ON switch of her new kettle and waited for it to boil. She then poured the water into a mug containing a teaspoon of decaffeinated coffee granules. She subsequently added one heaped spoonful of sugar, and the equivalent of two tablespoons of milk. Ms Sparks was all set to enjoy a well-earned cup of coffee when disaster struck.

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of British retail manufacturers. Bravely, she decided to go it alone. Her next stop? Zurich, the international headquarters of the coffee manufacturers Nescafé. Why, she asked the chairman, had they not made it clear on the label that their instant decaffeinated coffee contained a staining agent, and why was there no clear warning? The chairman put her in touch with Nescafé's Consumer Affairs spokesperson, who took over three days to reply: the company could bear no responsibility for the stains.

But Ms Sparks was not to be outdone by the Fat Cats of consumer durables. By now, she had given up a highly paid job as well as sacrificing her home and her family in order to gain justice for herself and others like her. She immediately despatched a letter to the head of Zanussi, the Tokyo-based company that manufactured the kettle, asking him what he intended to do about the stains on her tablecloth. She sent a copy of this letter to the Rumbelows head office, adding a hand-written postscript alerting them to the fact that they were stocking a faulty line, and suggesting an immediate withdrawal of any remaining kettles before further tablecloths were ruined. Two months have gone by, and Ms Sparks is still waiting for a reply. From Rumbelows she received a curt letter, stating that — and I quote — "As you will appreciate, we are unable to offer you the free set of table-linen, the new kettle and the automatic fridge-freezer you suggest. Thank you for your inquiry."

MAKE no apology for giving valuable space to this devastating tale. Even my colleague Paul Foot, with his wide experience of miscarriages of justice, will be taken aback by the tale of Pauline Sparks. And that's where I come in. As the new presenter of You And Yours, the long-running consumer programme on BBC Radio 4, I am in a position to right these grave wrongs.

Over the course of the series, I shall be using my position to cross-question senior representatives of the companies involved. Next week, I put it to Mr L Griffith, Customer Relations Officer of Debenhams, that there should be immediate legislation provisionally entitled The Hot Beverages on Cotton Tablecloths Bill — to safeguard the statutory rights of all those who find their new tablecloths irreparably damaged by hot beverages. And I shall also be hauling Ministers over the coals. Henceforth, I will be calling for 18 different additions to current legislation to safeguard not only our households but our basic liberties. If you, too, have encountered a problem that requires further legislation, do please write to me, Bel Littlejohn, c/o You And Yours. Together, we can work to get things banned.



Labour's former deputy leader, Roy Hattersley, and David Blunkett, education secretary, trade insults in their escalating row about Labour's broken promises

Battle of the lip-readers

THE FEUD SO FAR

● On Wednesday October 4, 1995 he [David Blunkett] told the Labour Party Conference: "Read my lips. No selection by examination or interview." That categorical assurance won the day for the Labour leadership. — Roy Hattersley, Guardian, November 26, 1997

● Roy Hattersley's talent for creative prose has not been destroyed by his elevation to the Upper Chamber... His accusations have little basis in reality... We will be allowing parents in areas where selective grammar schools remain to decide whether or not they wish those schools to remain selective. — David Blunkett, Guardian, November 27, 1997

● ... yet another illustration of the contempt for intellectual integrity which, as I wrote, has characterised Government education policy... David Blunkett made a promise to see him through a difficult party conference and... broke it without much regret. — Roy Hattersley, today

I FEEL only distaste for David Blunkett's political incoherence. But I regret the further damage that he does to his own reputation by attempting to refute the charges, which I made on Wednesday's commentary, without even mentioning my principal criticism.

The side-step is just another example of the fancy footwork of which I complained. I quoted exactly what he said in 1995: "Read my lips. No selection by examination or interview." That promise has

been broken. Yesterday's letter made no attempt to justify the breach of faith. Perhaps Blunkett regards it as impossible to justify. It will not be forgotten.

Thursday's letter provided yet another illustration of the contempt for intellectual integrity which, as I wrote, has characterised Government education policy. He accuses me of supporting the notion that poverty is an "excuse" for failure at school. In fact I quoted 40 years of research which demonstrates (repeatedly) that poverty is

a major cause (repeated cause) of underachievement. To a Government which proposes to abolish the single parent's allowance, that may be an inconvenient conclusion. But it is a fact, not an excuse.

David Blunkett writes of his hope of "allowing pupils who live in poorer areas to escape poverty". The notion of "escape", usually expressed with a metaphor about ladders, is an admission that, while a minority has the chance to scramble free, the rest remain imprisoned in disadvantage. All the

evidence confirms that a general improvement in educational performance requires a general increase in the standard of living enjoyed by the least well off.

Since we must assume that Thursday's letter was intended to reveal the rational principles which guide education policy, David Blunkett may care to attempt an explanation of why he proposed to divide the secondary sector into two categories of school — community and foundation.

When it is suggested that foundation status is intended to preserve the special esteem of grant maintained schools, he argues that they will be barely discernible from the community alternative. Asked why, then, foundation schools are to be created, he contradicts his initial explanation with the insistence that they offer a diversity within the secondary system. Occasionally we are told that foundation status is essential to accommodate the church schools — which could happily exist without it. Even were they necessary to preserve denominational education, there would be no reasonable justification for promoting the secular variety — except the wish to placate parents who want "something different".

On radio last Wednesday morning, Stephen Byers (the Minister of State at the DfES)

TODAY

HE'LL NEED ALL THE FRIENDS HE CAN GET

The House of Commons votes today on Michael Foster's Bill to outlaw hunting with dogs. If YOU believe that this cruelty has no place in our society, join the Friends of the RSPCA and help our growing campaign to get it banned for good.

Become a Friend today and we'll send you a membership badge, car sticker, our Animal Life magazine and regular newsletters to keep you up to date with all our work and campaigns — all from just £3 a month — less than £1 a week. Please help.

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Once completed please send to: RSPCA, FREEPOST, Bristol BS50 7AJ.

Name

Address

Postcode

THE AIMS OF THE RSPCA ARE TO PREVENT CRUELTY AND PROMOTE KINDNESS TO ANIMALS.

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Ismail Fahmi

Obstacle in Sadat's path to peace

ISMAIL Fahmi, who has died aged 75, was a career diplomat on whom great events — nothing less, in fact, than the most crucial turning point in recent Middle East history — conferred an international prominence which ended as abruptly and abruptly as it began. He helped to promote that turning point, only, in the end, to fall victim to it. It was his professional instincts, the diplomat's natural concern for order, balance and harmony in his country's international affairs, that spurred him, just as it was the same preoccupation that brought him down. His problem was that of many others before and after him. President Anwar Sadat, the master who raised and then removed him, was not a man of balance at all, but egotistic, impulsive, whimsical, given to recklessness, if occasionally brilliant, excess.

The turning point was the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty of 1979 — that first, momentous breakthrough in the "peace process" that contin-

ues to this day — along with a host of basic changes intimately bound up with it: the rise of American power in the Middle East at the expense of the Soviet Union, the deadly blow dealt to hallowed notions of Arab solidarity and of a truly "comprehensive" Arab-Israeli peace, with the Palestinians at the heart of it, as the only conceivable one. Born into a well-to-do, politically active Cairo family, Fahmi joined the diplomatic service five years before the overthrow of King Farouk, surviving that upheaval to fill several prominent positions in President Nasser's revolutionary new order, for which his intelligence, engaging personality and multi-lingual skills amply equipped him. It was under President Sadat, with his first ministerial post as under-secretary of state for foreign affairs, that he began to attract attention as an advocate, not just an executor, of policy. In 1972, when Egypt was overwhelmingly dependent, militarily and strategically, on the Soviet Union, he strongly crit-

icised the Kremlin at a private seminar, accusing it of wilfully perpetuating the state of "no war, no peace" with Israel. He urged Egypt to take military action against Israel in the context of a general opening up to the United States. Outraged, the Kremlin got Sadat to fire him. It was a short-lived disgrace, this being the advice which, with the Arab-Israeli war of October 1973, Sadat adopted with a vengeance. Fahmi was in Washington at the time, and within 24 hours of a Soviet nuclear alert on the Arab's behalf, and a US counter-alert on Israel's, he was posing for photographs in the obviously very congenial company of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, he laid before the American public the proposition — so startling at the time — that "Egypt is your gateway to the Middle East".

Appointed foreign minister, he became a key participant in the early, embryonic achievements of Pax Americana, the Geneva conference, Dr Kissinger's step-by-step di-

plomacy of military disengagement in Sinai and the Golan Heights. But even as he did so, he grew increasingly restive at the lengths Sadat seemed ready to go to in pursuit of his theory that the US held "90 per cent of the cards in the Middle East game". He now strove to mend relations with the Soviet Union, convinced that it was as dangerous now, as it had been before, to put one's faith in one super-power only. But his master, now eschewing all balance, sabotaged his efforts. Nor would Fahmi abandon another sacred premise of the par-Arab diplomacy to which Sadat was still officially wedded: he rejected any idea of direct Israeli-Egyptian negotiations, linking that with his insistence there could be no Middle East peace till Israel withdrew from "all" occupied territories and recognised the "legitimate rights" of the Palestinian people.

Then, in November 1977, came Sadat's astonishing gamble, the climax to which political desperation, allied with his impetuous nature,



Cordial relations... Ismail Fahmi with foreign secretary James Callaghan during a visit to London in 1975

had been propelling him. He made his historic pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Greeted with reverence and awe in the West, it left most of the Arab world aghast; and the disaffection began with his own high officials. Fahmi first among them. He resigned, the third, but not the last, of several foreign ministers to fall foul of their unpredictable master. He disappeared without a word from public life. Only in his memoirs, *Negotiating for Peace in the Middle East*, did he later explain why he had felt obliged to step down. For Sadat to go to Jerusalem would, he had believed, "destroy Egypt's leadership of the Arab world", and Sadat had had no "proof that the Is-

raelis would respond to his move with comparable good will." By the time of his death — from a heart attack following a fall — 20 years later to the month, Egypt has in good measure regained that leadership of the Arab world which Sadat sacrificed entirely. But it is a very much weaker, humbled Arab world, very much more subordinate to the US, the one and only superpower — and, in its own estimation at least, it still awaits that commensurate Israeli response which Fahmi forecast would never come.

David Hirst

Ismail Fahmi, diplomat, born 1922, died November 21, 1997

Andrew Pearson

Medicine in the front line

WHEN a perceptive history of health care in developing countries during the last 30 years is written, emphasis will be placed on the innovations and so many church-related hospitals were, and are, run by enthusiastic doctors who are equally at home managing a strangulated hernia, a child with post-measles malnutrition or a new drainage system for the hospital. Andrew Pearson, who has died aged 76, was just such a doctor and his influence, even if unrecognised, will be felt in health systems for decades to come.

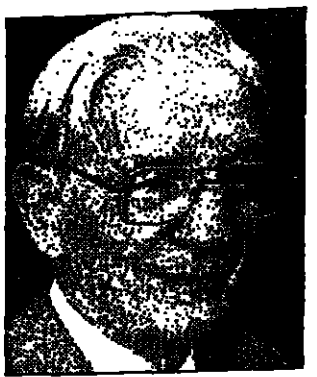
Andrew was born in China, the son of a Methodist doctor who had founded a local hospital. He qualified at the School of Medicine in Liverpool where he met his wife, Jean, a student in education. After a year's housemanship he took his Diploma in Tropical Medicine and Health and went to Huphe Province in China to work in local mission hospitals. He married Jean when she came out to join him in November 1948. It was a testing time enlivened by political change in China. Andrew had to attend weekly indoctrination classes — until he was asked to stop attending because he asked too many questions. At this time he had already developed a special interest in leprosy and had translated Muir's leprosy textbook into Mandarin. In 1951 it was proposed that either he became leprosy adviser to the local communist government or returned to the UK. He regretfully accepted the second alternative. In 1952 the Methodist Missionary Society appointed him to the Methodist hospital at Ilesha in Western Nigeria. Fund raising by the Wesley Guild in the UK meant a new hospital could be built, and Andrew soon became an expert in plumbing and the vagaries of a diesel generator, as well as gaining skills in supervision, administration and accounting so essential in a rapidly growing hospital.

In 1956 I joined him in Ilesha as one of the first paediatricians to work in church-related hospitals in Africa. He and his colleagues had obtained a grant from the West African Council for medical research which allowed me to develop long-term research in children growing up in the village of Ilesha. Andrew had also obtained a government subsidy paid for every child attending the under-fives clinic in the hospital. As the average attendance was soon 400 a day and most of the care was provided by locally trained nurses, this placed the hospital in a favourable financial climate for a number of years. Under his guidance the hospital, through its peripheral clinics, combated the last severe smallpox epidemic in the area and also undertook the first measles vaccination programme in Africa. With support from Glaxo a new block for students was built and a parent-held waiting chart for growth monitoring was printed, a format which in future years was to be spread worldwide by Unicef and WHO. By 1975, how-

ever, the mission could no longer afford to finance the hospital and it was taken over by the University.

Andrew moved to Igbo Ora, a rural health centre, where he organised community health work for medical students from Ibadan university. To widen postgraduate training in West Africa he helped to set up, and for many years ran, the post graduate faculty for GPs in Lagos. GPs in Nigeria needed to know about the running of small hospitals, have a knowledge of emergency surgery and administrative and other skills — areas that Andrew had developed so well at Ilesha.

On retirement in 1985 he settled in Bury St Edmunds, working as a lay preacher for the Methodist church. He also wrote about his work, publishing *Medical Administration for Frontline Doctors* in 1980 and *Front Line Hospital* an account of the Wesley Hospital at Ilesha in 1995. As a consultant he travelled to Nigeria, Zambia, the Philippines and Western Samoa and was involved in WONCA, the



Pearson... mission hospital

World GP Organisation, setting up a rural group which resulted in two congresses in Shanghai and Durban on rural health.

Those of us who knew him respected him as a listener and one to whom problems were an opportunity. A senior Nigerian once said he welcomed having Andrew's influence on committees: his presence prevented even hidden corruption.

David C Morley

Andrew Pearson, doctor, born December 10, 1921; died November 7, 1997

Death Notices

RELSON, Judith Hewitt (nee Gault) of Richmond, Surrey, on 26 November, widow of (1) George Victor Willmott and Marneg (died October 1988), and (2) Andrew Pearson (died October 1997). She is survived by her family and friends. Funeral at Mortlake Crematorium at 11.30 am, Friday 28 November. Donations to Age Concern please instead of flowers.

SHELDON, Professor Harry Norman, following yesterday's announcement cremated at Colwyn Bay Crematorium, Tuesday 26 November at 11 am.

Acknowledgments

MOSS, Anne, Sarah, Richard and Hannah wish to express sincere thanks to all relatives and friends who were such a source of comfort at this time. The number of people who attended Richard's funeral, John, Doris, Linda, Julie and Glyn are very much in our thoughts as we recover from the shock of his passing. We are very grateful to the Stables Fitness and Leisure Club, Sand Golf Club and Bury Music Centre. Our thanks go also to Paul L. Carrel and to Mr Peter Sillit. So many people will miss Richard in different ways but his cheerfulness and willingness to help will be remembered by all.

Memorial Services

DEAN, Anthony Francis OBE (Tony), died July 27th 1997. A Service of Thanksgiving will be held at 2pm on Monday December 29th 1997 at St. Peter's Parish Church, Ashby-de-la-Zouch. Relatives and friends are invited to attend. The Rev. Canon R. Ashby will officiate. The service will be held at 2pm on Monday December 29th.

WOLF, Robert Edward aged 86 years, died peacefully at Bromley, Kent, on Thursday 22nd November (formerly MP for Bromley 1962-1974). Burial at St. John's Church, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, on Monday 29th December at 11.30 am. The service will be held at 11.30 am on Monday 29th December.

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Hannah Pool

A MAP which accompanied a report headlined, Nuclear test 'victims' take Britain to court on Page 15 yesterday, showed the location of Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean. The Christmas Island on which nuclear tests were carried out is in the Pacific Ocean.

It is the policy of the Guardian to correct errors as soon as possible. Readers may contact the office of the Readers' Editor, Ian Mayes, by telephoning 0171 239 9599 between 11am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. Fax: 0171 239 9897. E-mail: Ian.Mayes@guardian.co.uk

Barbara

Reflections on the end of an affair

BARBARA, who has died aged 67, was one of the most original singer-composers to emerge in the Paris cabaret scene in the 1950s. President Jacques Chirac paid tribute to her this week: "She was talented, intensely devoted — to her public and to passion. Passion for words, for rhythms, but also passion for passion's sake." She was born in Paris, the daughter of a Polish mother and Russian father, and renamed herself Barbara after her Polish grandmother, who was called Vavara and was a celebrated cook. The Jewish family had to go into hiding during the occupation after the liberation. Barbara used voice and piano at the Paris Conservatoire, but did not stay long in the world of classical music. Her father died in 1949, the following year she married, but only stayed a few months with her husband, whom later she never mentioned. Her early attempts at singing were unsuccessful and for a while she washed dishes at La Fontaine des Quatre Saisons cabaret. She moved to Brussels, where she began to sing a repertoire of French songs by Leo Ferré, Jacques Prévert and Pierre MacOrlan. She opened her own club, but this too was a failure. In 1957 she returned to Paris and became the singer-in-residence at L'Ecluse on the Quai des Grands-Augus-

tins, staying there until 1963. On the fish-net draped stage at the end of the long, crowded room, Barbara would seat herself at the upright piano, dressed in black, and sing songs by Georges Brassens (*La Femme d'Ecluse* and *Il n'y a pas d'amour heureux*), Jacques Brel (*Les Femmes*) and others. She also sang her own songs and, gradually, she added more and more of her own compositions to the programme, writing both lyrics and music. She made her first record in 1967, and in 1968 reached the peak of her form with *Barbara chante Barbara*. Barbara did not sing with the raucous, plaintive voice of the chanteuses-realites but used a mixture of speech and song, touching on high notes with a flute-like tremulous quality which made the words of her songs all the more effective. Her compositions employed traditional waltz or tango rhythms against which she seemed to be trying to sing too many words, five or six to a beat. Her timing was impeccable, as in the fast waltz *Le Zinzin* which she wrote with Jean Debut, with its dozens of repetitions, "Zinzin" rhyming with "C'est bien". The historian Colin Evans analysed the themes of her songs in a paper given at the National Sound Archive in 1981: "The typical Barbara song has the narrator alone, reflecting on the end of a love affair... In-



Barbara... her songs are so much bound up with the French language that they defy translation PHOTOGRAPH: BETTINA FREMIS

tensity of feeling is the key-stone and it depends on absence." Until 1969, when she appeared in *Mardi des Capucines* concert series, Barbara never found an international public: her songs are so much bound up with her use of the French language that they defy translation. She was an accomplished actress and made several films, including *Franz* in which she co-starred with Jacques Brel, so many of whose songs she had sung. *L'Oiseau rare* with Jean-Claude Brilly, and *Je suis né à Venise* with Maurice Béjart.

last year. She was a prolific recording artist — three years ago Polygram issued a 13-volume anthology on CD. Unlike her predecessors Edith Piaf and Juliette Gréco, Barbara never found an international public: her songs are so much bound up with her use of the French language that they defy translation. She was an accomplished actress and made several films, including *Franz* in which she co-starred with Jacques Brel, so many of whose songs she had sung. *L'Oiseau rare* with Jean-Claude Brilly, and *Je suis né à Venise* with Maurice Béjart.

As her voice became thinner in the 1980s, Barbara adapted to the fashion for much larger backing groups using synthesizers and echo-effects, not altogether happily. In 1988 she starred with Gérard Depardieu in a music-theatre event staged at the 5,000-seat Zenith stadium in Paris, *Lily Passion*, a story of a woman's obsession with a killer. Surrounded by strobe lighting, Barbara seated at a piano, sang while Depardieu spoke her lyrics in his throaty style. Barbara was one of the first French stars to work for Aid charities, she distributed con-

doms at her concerts and had a special phone line on which she would speak to people, sometimes for hours. She also dedicated a song to François Mitterrand, *Regarde*. Barbara's songs are those of a loner, a survivor. *Nantes* is about the death of her father, and *Mourir pour Mourir*, *L'Amour noir*, *Attendez que ma joie revienne* and *Chapeau bas* all played on her personality, part vamp, part victim.

Patrick O'Connor

Barbara (Monique Serf), singer, born June 9, 1930; died November 25, 1997

John Bird

JOHN Bird, who has died aged 73, first set foot in continental Europe as a Staffordshire infantryman in 1944. In 1975 he was a leader of the Midlands No campaign during the Common Market referendum. But 13 years later he won a by-election to become the Black Country's member of the European Parliament, and remained in Strasbourg until 1994.

Yet he will probably be best remembered for his 15 years as leader of Wolverhampton Council — on which he served for 25 years. He also chaired the council's education committee. He will also be remembered as the man who saved Wolverhampton Wanderers Football Club — he led a controversial public and private finance deal from the council

that bailed out the club in 1986. Soon after his election as chair of the European Parliamentary Labour Party he suffered a stroke. Although his recovery was almost complete he decided to retire in 1994. His own Westminster ambitions ended in a number of close-run election defeats, but he nurtured many a political career.

John Bird represented the dignity of the working man, and dedicated his life to creating a world in which ordinary people could thrive. He is survived by his wife Gwen and two sons.

Simon Murphy and Gary Tiley

John Bird, politician, born February 4, 1924; died November 18, 1997

Birthdays

Kris Akabusi, athlete, 38; Prof Giovanni Aquilicchia, Italian scholar and linguist, 74; Fiona Armstrong, television presenter, 41; Sir Gordon Reid, retired vice-chancellor, Queen's University, Belfast, 46; Rita Mae Brown, novelist, 53; Geoffrey Clarke, artist and sculptor, 73; Eileen NI Chuilleanáin, Irish poet and lecturer, 55; Cecilia Colledge, former

ice skater, 77; Alistair Darling MP, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, 44; Terence Frisby, actor and playwright, 63; John Galliano, fashion designer, 37; The Rt Rev Michael Hare Duke, chairman, Age Concern, Scotland, 72; Bernard Kops, poet and playwright, 71; Hope Lange, actress, 66; Prof Claude Lévi-Strauss, social anthropologist, 89; Lord Macdonald,

Chief of the Name and Arms of Macdonald, 50; Gordon Marsden, Labour MP, 44; Keith Miller, cricketer, 78; Dervla Murphy, novelist and travel writer, 66; Randy Newman, singer, songwriter, 54; Stephen Roche, former cycling champion, 38; Randolph Stow, novelist and poet, 62; Mike Walker, football manager, 52; Ray Whitney, Conservative MP, 67.

Jackdaw



Old dice

THE lore of the die, more commonly known by its plural, "dice" is one of the earliest gambling aids. Herodotus claimed that dice were invented by the Lydians in the time of King Alyx, but Sophocles disagreed, crediting the invention to a Greek called Palamedes, allegedly during the siege of Troy. Although it may seem plausible that dice were introduced to while away the time of bored besiegers, archaeologists have discovered cubical dice, to all intents and purposes just like today's, in Egyptian tombs dating from 3000 BC. Dice have been found with Chi-

nese remains from around 600 BC. Dice with diverse shapes and strange markings, made of materials ranging from beaver teeth to porcelain, have been used by North American Indians, Aztecs and Mayans, Polynesians, Inuits, and many African tribes.

Bucks Fizz

CHAMPAGNE: There's no other wine that's so consistently delightful to drink; nor is there another that people so consistently open for reasons other than what's in the bottle. Tankers are baptised with it, baseball managers get doused with it, B-girls fleece their johns with it. It has been considered an aphrodisiac since it first became popular at the ultra-licentious court of Louis XV (which no doubt would surprise the good monk Dom Pérignon, who is supposed to have invented it). It's become a priapic totem for all classes of celebration, especially

ones involving the stock market. It bestows a few minutes of class on those who have none: it's the one wine not wine drinkers drink. Champagne is the enduring symbol of conspicuous consumption, the ultimate look-at-me drink. Through no fault of its own, in short, champagne can at times be just a touch vulgar, if you're a type-C personality, someone who drinks champagne because of its layers of diaphanous charm (and of course you are), this constitutes a bit of a barrier when it comes to public consumption. More champagne snob than socialist, New York.

How to...

MANY years ago, the promoter was able to set himself up in business from the proceeds of drug dealing at Shoom and Solaris. These days, he's more likely to have got the money from his stockbroker father. He thinks inland Revenue is like Seaside Revenue, except without the beach and the topos birds.

He's a gambling man who can give you odds on everything from the first scorer in the Cup Final to the elections in Albania. Vital signs: Likely to be a loveable Cockney rogue, or a canny Scotsman. As likely to be found in the restaurant at Walthamstow Dogs as at the Atlantic Bar & Grill. Handy accoutrements: Mobile phone, BMW six series, set of golf clubs, house in a desirable suburb (well it was a desirable suburb until he moved in). Perks of the job: Annual hole in Ibiza. Increased chances of pulling. Untold wealth (usually followed by untold poverty).

Advice to potential promoters: Under no circumstances should you tell your family what you're really doing (our advice is to tell your mum you're becoming a priest). Potential promoters: Terry Venables, David Mellor ("I've got great contacts in the Middle East. Maybe we could do a rave there.") Damien Hirst. Quintessential promoter movies: *The Godfather*, *The*

Italian Job ("You're only supposed to blow the bloody door off.") The promoter as footballer: John Fashanu (wears flash gear, has business interests all over the place). Would be played in a film by: James Beck (Dad's Army) Michael Caine. If he wasn't a promoter he would be: Bookmaker, ticket tout or cabinet minister. Handy promoter phraseology and vocabulary: "Charlie", "Larging it", "Ducking and diving", "It's a done deal", "Not guilty, your honour". Dream piece of promoter furniture: A sofa constructed entirely from used fivers ("It's modern art, innit?") The promoter in 10 years' time: Setting his story to the *News of the World* for £2,000 ("The bloody taxman caught up with me.") How to be a promoter, according to Mixmag.

Body building

ECO-ARCHITECTS are a new breed of architect whose work is inspired by life, the local materials of the envi-

ronment, the forces of nature and their subtle interactions. They do not oppose Tao, the way of things, but let go into life, listening and acting with the Intelligent Flow of Nature.

Eco-architects are motivated by green awareness not economic greed. They are interested in sustainability not destruction, renewal not decay, healthy expression not toxic pollution.

Eco-architects are breaking the concrete moulds and



Mixmag... promoter glories

taking the toxic lids off convention. Their aim is to unite ecology, health and spiritual awareness under one roof, in one home. To create homes that breathe with nature, homes that interact with their surroundings and do not steal from them.

Riding the wave of practical eco-activism, Jerome Partington is an eco-architect with a green heart and a green vision. "When I started I found the quality of housing in this country appalling," he explains. "I wanted to create healthy, fun architecture that sustained life and de-stressed society. I know it is possible to do this by working more closely with nature and natural systems. In my work I like to show that the Tao of Nature is more powerful than commercialism."

The Tao is useful because it gives me a mental picture to help me take the right path, to find the right balance between the myriad of forces that influence every decision we make. Environmentally conscious and anti-consumerist, eco-architecture is the only choice for

the next millennium, argues Spirit.

Jackdaw wants jewels. E-mail jackdaw@guardian.co.uk, fax 0171-713 4966; write Jackdaw, The Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER.

Corrections and Clarifications

A MAP which accompanied a report headlined, Nuclear test 'victims' take Britain to court on Page 15 yesterday, showed the location of Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean. The Christmas Island on which nuclear tests were carried out is in the Pacific Ocean.

It is the policy of the Guardian to correct errors as soon as possible. Readers may contact the office of the Readers' Editor, Ian Mayes, by telephoning 0171 239 9599 between 11am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. Fax: 0171 239 9897. E-mail: Ian.Mayes@guardian.co.uk

صلى الله عليه وسلم

THE GUINNESS REPORT: Not everything in black and white makes sense

An enterprise of deception

Don Atkinson

THE £2.35 billion Guinness takeover of the Distillers group in 1986 was based on an "enterprise of deception", Government inspectors reported yesterday. They said that "much of what went on was wrong by any tolerable moral standards", and that, had it not been for illegal market-rigging, the battle might have been won by supermarkets group Argill.

The four people convicted in the Guinness trials — including former chairman Ernest Saunders — come in for scathing criticism, and there are unflattering references to merchant banker Roger Seelig, blue-blooded stockbrokers Cazenove and the late Ephraim Margulies, a legendary commodities trader.

Mr Saunders' "win at any price" strategy meant an extraordinary "tan club" was put together of people and companies charged with buying Guinness shares and keeping their value high. In some cases, they were paid illegal indemnities against loss and equally illegal "success fees".

This "club" included US spirits importer Schenley (effectively repaid by the granting of Guinness of a trademark and a franchise), a wealthy Swiss resident, Violet Saulberger-Simon, (paid £1.9 million for losses on Guinness holdings), clients of merchant bank Henry Ansbacher (paid £7.6 million acquisition and carrying costs by Guinness), Wall Street bank L.F. Rothschild (£19 million acquisition costs refunded by Guinness's merchant bank, Morgan Grenfell), Austria's Z-Bank (£254,000 compensation for losses, paid by Guinness), insider-dealer Ivan Boesky (who received a \$100 million "investment" from Guinness

in return for supporting the shares) and Switzerland's Bank Leu (a leading supporter). Not only were any subsequent payments illegal, according to the report, but Mr Saunders also stole £3 million from Guinness for his own benefit — in his 1990 trial, he was convicted of stealing the £5.2 million of which the £3 million formed a part, but this is the first time it has been stated he intended any of it for himself.

Guinness was successful in its bid, but Mr Boesky's arrest and subsequent confessions to the US authorities disclosed the possibility of a market-rigging scheme. This information was sent to Britain, and inspectors went into Guinness in December 1986. By that time Mr Saunders was embroiled in controversy for reneging on pledges made during the bid, most notably: that the merged group would be chaired by one of Scotland's most distinguished businessmen, Bank of Scotland governor Sir Thomas Risk.

The inspectors said Mr Saunders's account of the conversation he claims to have had with Sir Thomas, which convinced him Sir Thomas was wrong for the job, was "pure fabrication". Mr Saunders wanted to take the chair for himself, the inspectors said, because he wished to be "cock of the walk". More seriously, they claim Mr Saunders feared Sir Thomas would eventually uncover the illegal payments.

Mr Saunders could reckon that these matters were unlikely to remain concealed forever from a new chairman, who could not be relied upon to be quiescent. Other targets for criticism include: ● Mr Seelig, the Morgan Grenfell takeover wizard. He told inspectors the use of the word "protected" in a conversation with Henry Ansbacher's Lord Spens referred only to the fact that he would be sympathetic to any Ansbacher clients losing money on Guinness shares. "We have no doubt, however... that its intended and understood connotations went beyond the practice of sequential favours or backscratching... Mr Seelig was giving his word that Lord Spens and his clients would not be permitted to suffer loss". ● Cazenove. The brokers allowed themselves to be associated with a letter to the Takeover Panel from Guinness finance chief Olivier Roux in April 1986, claiming falsely that a big purchase of shares was unconnected with Guinness. ● Mr Margulies. The commodities trader engaged in Guinness share support and tried to cover it up when the DTI inquiry began, according to the inspectors.

A mirror on moral maze of the City

Costly and lengthy DTI inquiries have lost both their place and potency, writes Don Atkinson

THE £3.15 million Guinness report may be one of the last of its kind — to investigate company affairs. Once such investigations, made under special powers conferred by the Companies Act, were a routine part of City and commercial life. Among the better-known reports was that into Robert Maxwell's Pergamon company, published in 1971, which branded him unfit to run a public company.

Traditionally, the DTI has jealously guarded its powers to police the Companies Acts, but the changing regulatory framework has removed much of the urgency for the appointment of inspectors with powers to demand answers to their questions and to insist on the production of documents. Once, such inspections were a swift way to signal public concern and to get to the heart of the matter, but that is no longer so.

The creation in 1988 of the Serious Fraud Office, with similar powers, meant that for the first time a quasi-police agency was able to move quickly against fraudsters, it meant also that DTI-type powers were no longer the unique preserve of the department's inspectors and its Official Receivers.



Seeking to mix right cocktail

Lisa Buckingham City Editor

GUINNESS disappeared this week, 11 years after the Department of Trade and Industry began its inquiry and 111 years after the company was formed. Shareholders voted on Wednesday to merge Guinness with Grand Metropolitan, creating a group called Diageo. Guinness will disappear other than as the name of a pint of stout.

The merger comes just over a year after the embarrassing disclosure that Guinness was planning a hostile £13 billion bid for GrandMet. The consolidation of the drinks sector reflects the apparent stagnation of most major markets. A decade ago the impetus for mergers was the need to drive capacity out of the Scotch whisky market, but few would have bet on Guinness being one of the forces for change. The group lost its way during the 1970s after a series of misguided acquisitions. Following his appointment as managing director in 1981, Ernest Saunders set about dismantling its rag-bag of operations and redefining its core business.

Trying times

October 1981: Ernest Saunders joins Guinness from Nestlé; December 1985: Argill, the supermarkets group, bids £1.87 billion for drinks group Distillers; 1986: January: Guinness makes agreed offer of £2.2 billion; April: Guinness declares victory; November: Wall Street wheeler-dealer Ivan Boesky admits insider-trading and tells investigators of involvement with the Distillers battle; information is passed to British authorities; December: DTI inspectors arrive at Guinness; 1987: January: Guinness alleges in letter to its solicitors that Saunders is implicated in share-support operation; Saunders "stands aside" as executive chairman during DTI inquiry; later in the month he is formally sacked; May: Saunders arrested and charged; October: Sir Jack Lyons charged; Gerald Ronson charged; March 1988: Anthony Parnes charged; August 1990: All four convicted after 112-day trial; 1992: February: Guinness III case against Roger Seelig and David Mayhew abandoned by Serious Fraud Office; hearing of Guinness II case against Lord Spens and Roger Seelig collapses; November: Lord Spens granted not-guilty verdict; February 1993: Guinness IV trial ends with not-guilty verdict on Thomas Ward; May 1994: Saunders case referred to Europe; November 1995: Court of Appeal quashes one conspiracy conviction against Sir Jack Lyons; December 1996: European Court of Human Rights rules Saunders's rights were violated by use of compulsorily acquired DTI evidence in court.

Guardian Crossword No 21,133

Set by Janus

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	32	33	34	35

Across

- 1 He painted "Bird in a Flutter" (5)
- 4 Strips I'd convert to undergarments (7)
- 9 Where to find a bottomless gulf in A1 condition (5)
- 10 Ever-changing English official (5)
- 11 Vehicle of some force (5)
- 12 Pioneer breaking rib in hillside wood (9)
- 13 Exercised authority but was incontinent, we hear (7)
- 15 Bird achieving hit on target (6)
- 17 Way star turn opens (5)
- 19 Dealt with male of advanced years (7)
- 22 Food ordered by eight taps (5)
- 24 Memorial of some rare lichen (5)

Down

- 1 Traveller getting some return from fur trader (7)
- 2 Audacious attempt at imposition at the couturier's? (3,2)
- 3 One who refrains from ordering tea in bars (5)
- 4 Sketch of girl putting on a little weight (7)
- 5 Musician engaged in clever diversion (5)
- 6 Killing form of winter sport, reportedly (5)
- 7 Young animals needing guides (5)

Whatever happened to ERNEST SAUNDERS?

THE 1990s have seen Ernest Saunders return to multinational business with information systems company Harpur-Gelco, a job thought to be worth at least £300,000 a year. In addition, he has a Guinness pension of £70,000-plus a year and earnings from management consultancy. His renewed success at the age of 62 has brought controversy: former business partner David Elias is suing Mr Saunders and others over the value of Harpur-Gelco. Mr Saunders is strongly defending any claim. Attempts to clear his name with regard to Guinness brought two rebuffs in the Court of Appeal but in Strasbourg European judges ruled his rights had been violated because he had been forced to provide evidence against himself.

Whatever happened to GERALD RONSON?

WHEN he began his year-long prison sentence in 1991, tycoon Gerald Ronson had one big advantage. His Heron property and retail empire was privately owned, and he was its undisputed boss. Wife Gail was put in charge during his period in jail: when he emerged, the slump had hit and Heron looked in danger of sinking. Mr Ronson, now 58, asked his bankers for time to re-order the group and Heron survived. He has always protested his innocence. The inspectors accuse him of double-crossing Guinness by buying Argill shares while taking a £5 million backhand for supporting Guinness. He wanted the success fee, they say, because "Mr Ronson saw no reason to be excluded from the feast".

Whatever happened to ANTHONY PARNES?

ONE-TIME freelance stockbroker Anthony Parnes, now 51, has not recovered his bounce since being jailed for 30 months (cut to 21 months on appeal) for his part in the affair. The man once famed for doing business with a phone clamped to each ear has slipped from public view, his marriage ended and large sums spent trying to clear his name. The inspectors say Mr Parnes shared a £350,000 success fee from Guinness for his help during the 1985 bid for whisky-maker Bell's with Jack Lyons, and the two men pooled a £3.35 million fee after the Distillers bid, with Mr Parnes retaining £2.8 million. It was Jack Lyons who had introduced Mr Parnes to Mr Saunders; "Nobody would have described him [Mr Parnes] as a pillar of the establishment", says the report.

Whatever happened to JACK LYONS?

JACK Lyons, now 81, saw his social standing destroyed by the Guinness affair. He lost his high-society and social position as philanthropist. Spared jail through ill health, he was fined £2 million. The inspectors accuse him of personal share-support during the Distillers bid, buying £3 million of Guinness shares and expecting to be covered by Guinness against any loss. They say he persuaded Austria's Z-Bank to buy Guinness shares on the same basis. He lied to the inspectors about this, they say. Regarding fees he negotiated for Mr Parnes for the Bell's and Distillers bids, it was "scarcely laudable" that he hid from Guinness that he would share in the fees, as well as collecting his own.

Whatever happened to JAMES GULLIVER?

THE fate of James Gulliver — the nearly man inspectors say may well have been cheated of ownership of Distillers by the share-rigging — diverged sharply from that of the company he had built up, Presto supermarkets group Argill. The retailer's image was dented in March 1986, during the bid, when inaccuracies in his Who's Who entry were uncovered. He slipped from public view and died last year. Despite the bid, Argill went from strength to strength.

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Arjo Wiggins

An enterprise of deception, page 15

Plus: Number cruncher deciding Asia's destiny

Tomorrow: Shaken and stirred by mega-merger

Financial Editor: Alex Brummer
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FinanceGuardian

Asia in turmoil



Under a shadow... a builder shelters from the midday heat in Bangkok as he ponders Thailand's increasing job losses in the construction sector

PHOTOGRAPH: THANA KIRAKORN

Tokyo offers prop to banks

Mark Atkinson
and John Gittings

JAPAN'S authorities yesterday stepped up their campaign to allay fears about the stability of the country's banking system.

The Bank of Japan poured trillions of yen into the money markets to make it easier for banks to borrow short-term funds while premier Ryutaro Hashimoto raised the prospect of using public funds to prop up the system.

Japanese financial regula-

tors hauled in representatives of 13 domestic and foreign broking houses for a dressing-down about short-selling banking shares.

"We're seeing a sense of crisis in the government," said Kaoru Ichikawa, chief manager of equities trading at Kosul Securities.

Although the Nikkei share index showed a respite, more evidence emerged of financial scandals.

Tsugio Yukihira, former chairman of the doomed Yamachi brokerage, yesterday owned up to concealing huge losses incurred through ill-fated "tobashi" deals but denied

newspaper allegations of insider dealing.

As an official at an affiliate of the brokerage plunged to his death from a seven-storey building, Mr Yukihira said: "If the company had disclosed problem assets, it would not have been able to survive."

He told Japan's parliament: "We thought that by producing good results in the future we would be able to restore trust in the company and see earnings rise."

Of the \$1 trillion yen (\$14 billion) that Yamachi Securities chalked up in liabilities, the company said some 264.8 billion yen were losses

incurred through "tobashi" deals. The practice involves compensating clients for investment losses by finding a chain of temporary buyers for the assets, who acquire them at their initial selling price.

Mr Yukihira, who stepped down from his post in August because of the firm's alleged involvement in a corporate racketeering scandal, said reports in the daily Tokyo Shimbun of his trading in the company's shares earlier this year were "totally wrong". He added: "I have never even sold one share of Yamachi."

Mr Hashimoto said yesterday he was "thinking very

seriously about ways to use public funds without contradicting our fiscal reform policy". Speaking in Ottawa, he said: "It will be a very close policy call, but we will find a way."

The collapse of Yamachi was the likely reason for the apparent suicide of Seiichi Tanigashira, aged 40, a deputy section chief at Taiheiyu Securities Co, who leapt from a building in Osaka, a Taiheiyu spokesman said.

Mr Tanigashira had been dealing with inquiries from clients concerned about the future of the affiliated company, the spokesman said.

In Seoul, finance minister Lim Chang-yul admitted that the South Korean government would need "far more" than the \$20 billion it had requested from the International Monetary Fund to repair its battered economy.

Hong Kong would come to the rescue of South Korea if necessary, the former colony's financial secretary, Donald Tsang, said in London. Asia's financial upheavals might be a blessing in disguise if they induced more realism in the region. But Korea was such a large economy that "the world could sink with it".

Hyundai was responding to reports that the financial turmoil in South Korean markets and a failure to arrange sufficient finance had forced it to delay the project.

But a Hyundai spokesman dismissed the reports that the company was pulling out of Scotland as "speculation".

Construction of phase one of the Fife complex was on schedule and a full complement of 800 staff would be in place by late next year.

Scottish industry minister Brian Wilson tried to allay mounting concerns by saying he was reassured by Hyundai's commitment to phase one of the project. "We are aware of the difficult economic situation in South Korea and will keep in very close touch with the company."

Locate in Scotland, the arm of Scottish Enterprise which has responsibility for attracting inward investment, fought off fierce competition from the Continent and other regions in Britain to win the semi-conductor plant.

Crawford Beveridge, chairman of Scottish Enterprise, said: "Of course, there are problems in the Korean economy. But Hyundai is in the middle of hiring at the moment and speculation about the future of the project is very damaging."

"LG is a global company which spreads its risks. The stability of the UK is an encouragement to do more rather than less," Mr Shukman said.

"It's very much business as usual here on site," a company spokeswoman said, insisting the project was on schedule.

"Production is scheduled for January 1999, a busy recruitment campaign is under way, and those are the goals we are working towards."

Unravelling the mess ultimately hinges on turning China's banks into real banks instead of automatic teller machines for state factories and other arms of the state. This in turn will depend on the state being able to raise more taxes so that banks can shed their functions as an arm of the finance ministry.

Optimists point to the expected appointment as prime minister of Zhu Rongji, a tough-minded vice-premier who led China's unpopular austerity drive. "He is going to tackle the problem head-on. You need someone who makes enemies not friends," said Huang Yasheng, a Chinese economist at the Harvard Business School.

"Whether he will last long is another question, but we need someone to make a start."

Already there are signs the Chinese juggernaut is slowing. Prices are falling, unsold goods are piling up in warehouses and more and more buildings, like those in Pudong, stand empty. The new buzzword among economists is deflation.

China's financial system has been the soft underbelly of Beijing's reforms," the World Bank warned in an otherwise upbeat review of China's economy prepared before the crisis. "It is the sector most vulnerable to shocks." The choice, it said, is

Scotland sweats on survival of hi-tech investment by South Koreans as Wales enjoys sigh of relief

Fears grow for Hyundai plant

Lawrence Donegan

AS 22 BILLION plant to be built in Scotland, creating 1,000 jobs, was last night set to become the first big British casualty of Asia's financial crisis.

Ministers were left in the dark about the fate of the semi-conductor plant planned by South Korean electronics group Hyundai in the Dunfermline constituency of the Chancellor, Gordon Brown.

The complex was intended to be the second phase of a \$3 billion development and was expected to create around 1,000 jobs. The first plant is under construction.

But fears were growing that the factory would fall victim to financial retrenchment in Korea, where the government is going cap in hand to the International Monetary Fund for a multi-billion pound bailout. The Fund is putting pressure on Korean firms to slash their overseas investments,

according to senior UK government sources.

Hyundai heightened fears for the plant when it insisted yesterday that its commitment to the project had always been dependent on market conditions. The first phase of the complex will begin production in late 1998

as planned, company officials said. "We have made it clear from the outset that the project was planned in two phases... the company remains fully committed to phase one of the project. It has always been the case that a final commitment to phase two was dependent on market conditions."

The downbeat tone of yesterday's remarks by Hyundai was at variance with the official statements announcing the company's investment in October last year, which made no mention of the second phase of the project being dependent on market conditions.

Development Agency about the future of the project and the local authority is confident that Newport will not find itself in the same boat as Dunfermline, where Hyundai has rung warning bells.

"We are happy at the moment that it is all systems go because we are so much further ahead with the project than Scotland," said a spokeswoman for Newport County Borough Council.

The LG project initially promised to bring 6,100 new jobs but LG, one of Korea's big five conglomerates, has since talked of increasing this figure to 6,400 in the first phase of a \$2.1 billion investment.

Mike Shukman, LG project director at the Welsh Development Agency, said the firm had indicated that events in Korea would not slow the huge project to manufacture colour tubes for television sets and computer monitors, and semi-conductors.

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"Whether he will last long is another question, but we need someone to make a start."

Gwent confident of escaping east wind's blast

SILICON Gwent, home to one of Europe's biggest inward investment projects, remained in buoyant mood yesterday, confident it will escape the blast of Asia's financial storms, writes Geoffrey Gibbs.

Barely 16 months after Korea's LG Group was wooed to the area, finished products have begun to emerge from the first of the hi-tech plants under construction on a 250-acre science park near Newport.

LG has assured the Welsh Development Agency about the future of the project and the local authority is confident that Newport will not find itself in the same boat as Dunfermline, where Hyundai has rung warning bells.

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Notebook

Guinness-style morals live on



Alex Brummer

DESPITE its vintage, the Guinness report is far from being an irrelevance. It paints a far different picture of the Guinness affair than it was generally possible to glean from the show trials of 1990-93.

These trials were largely concerned with apportioning the blame for the share conspiracy, which enabled Guinness to swallow the Distillers company, on the former Guinness chairman and chief executive Ernest Saunders and a narrow group including Heron property tycoon Gerald Ronson, stockbroker Anthony Parnes and the investor (Sir) Jack Lyons. Subsequent prosecutions against advisers Roger Seelig, Lord Spens and eventually Thomas Ward (in 1993) were aborted and, in the latter case, failed.

As the inspectors note, they were not empowered to look into the rival bid for Distillers by Argyll, or the previous hostile takeover by Guinness of distillers Arthur Bell & Sons. They clearly suspect that if they had opened this can, worms would have come crawling out.

Last night, the Panel, which has been fighting its own rearguard action against the European Union takeover directive, promised to consider "whether any further measures should be implemented to enforce the code during the course of takeover bids".

This after 11 years of study by inspectors who have concluded that it is essential that any third party purchase of shares in active co-operation with the company making the bid should be explicitly disclosed, whether there is an indemnity or not, as in the Jacob Rothschild example.

The theory put around by Lord Moynie (Jonathan Guinness), among others, that Saunders, although a good marketing chap, was seduced into over-reaching himself and the company by a fast crowd of rather glamorous Jewish entrepreneurs is not at all borne out by the inspectors.

Instead, the inspectors have painstakingly reconstructed a trail of paper which points to a myriad of participants. A chance Sunday morning meeting between Lord (Jacob) Rothschild on a West End pavement the day before Guinness unseathed his bid, led the financier (after the bid had been announced) to build up a substantial stake through Cazenove and Morgan Grenfell as part of what he described as "foreign affairs", keeping other City institutions happy.

There were no pay-offs, as there were for Gerald Ronson and for Ernest Saunders himself, as we now know. But the chases, as the inspectors note, in effect were "to create a favourable climate for future business from Cazenove and Morgan Grenfell" and should have been revealed.

The cast of characters in the subterfuge would certainly have graced a work of fiction. There is the rich Swiss-based investor Mrs Seuberg-Simon, the New

York house of LF Rothschild Unterberg Towbin, and the now convicted insider dealer Ivan Boesky.

If you thought that the late Robert Maxwell was the first businessman to see his company's pension funds as a ploy to be deployed in the interest of directors and shareholders rather than the pensioners, think again.

Throughout the takeover there was pressure on the pension funds of Guinness and its subsidiaries to play their role in bolstering the share price.

The inspectors broadly find that in the City of the late 1980s anything went, at a period when takeovers were at a peak the financial community's own policeman — the Takeover Panel — was a paper tiger largely ignored or circumvented by big corporations and by what was left of the City's magic circle.

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